METIPOM'S HOSTAGE

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METIPOM'S HOSTAGE

NOT FOR LOAN

METIPOM'S HOSTAGE

BEING A NARRATIVE OF CERTAIN SURPRISING ADVENTURES BEFALLING ONE DAVID LINDALL IN THE FIRST YEAR OF KING PHILIP'S WAR

BY

RALPH HENRY BARBOUR

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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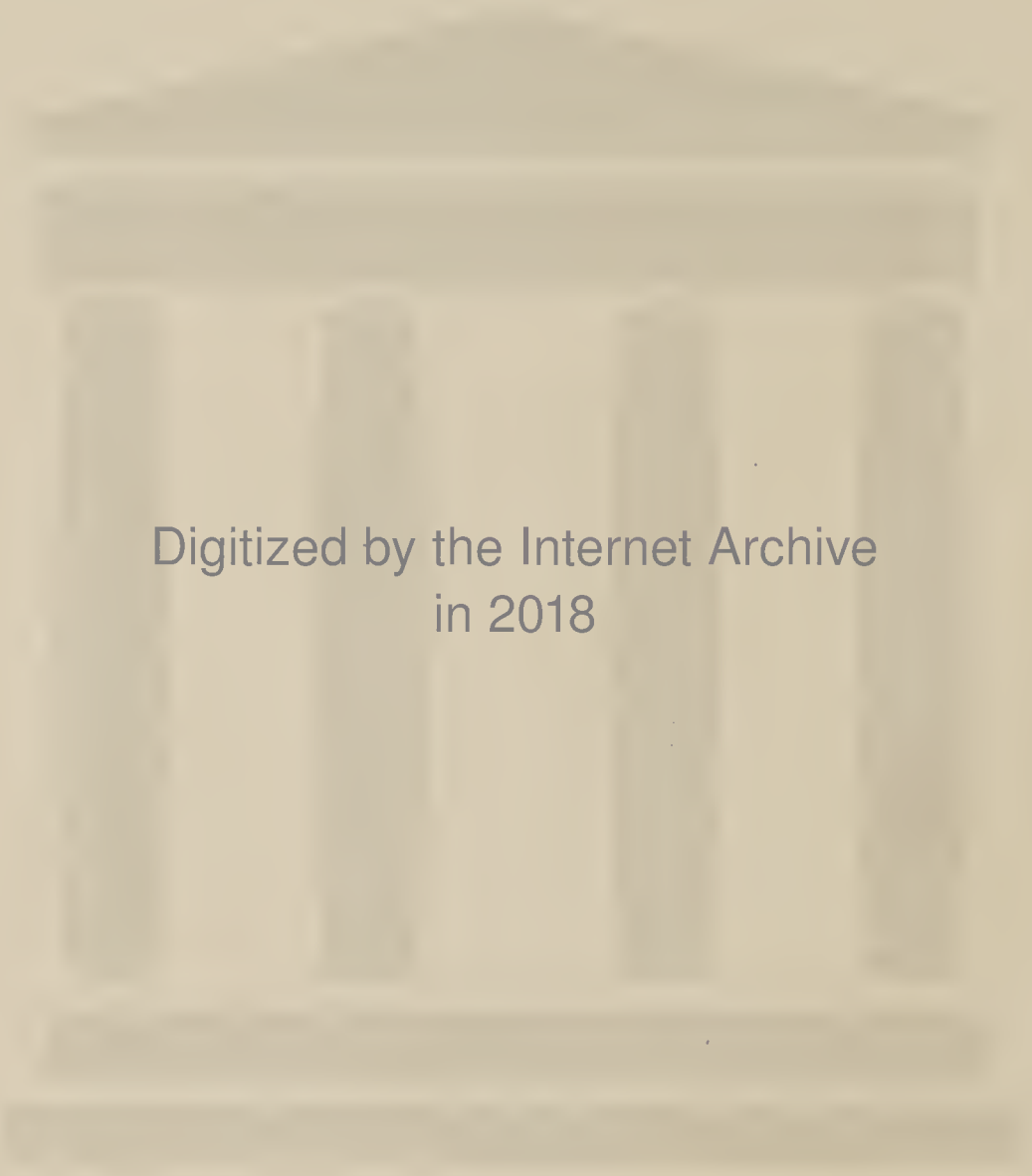

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METIPOM'S HOSTAGE

CHAPTER I

THE RED OMEN

David Lindall stirred uneasily in his sleep, sighed, muttered, and presently became partly awake. Thereupon he was conscious that all was not as it had been when slumber had overtaken him, for, beyond his closed lids, the attic, which should have been as dark at this hour as the inside of any pocket, was illuminated. He opened his eyes. The rafters a few feet above his head were visible in a strange radiance. He raised himself on an elbow, blinking and curious. The light did not come from the room below, nor was it the yellow glow of a pine-knot. No sound came to him save the loud breathing of his father and Obid, the servant, the former near at hand, the latter at the other end of the attic: no sound, that is, save the soft sighing of the night breeze in the pines and hemlocks at the eastern edge of the clearing. That was

ever-present and so accustomed that David had to listen hard to hear it. But this strange red glow was new and disturbing, and now, wide awake, the boy sought the explanation of it and found it once his gaze had moved to the north window.

Above the tops of the distant trees beyond the plantation, the sky was like the mouth of a furnace, and against the unearthly glow the topmost branches of the taller trees stood sharply, like forms cut from black paper.

"Father!" called the boy.

Nathan Lindall was awake on the instant.

"You called, David?" he asked.

"Yes, father. The forest is afire!"

"Nay, 'tis not the forest," answered Nathan Lindall when he had looked from the window. "The woods are too damp at this season, and I have never heard of the Indians firing them save in the fall. 'Tis some one's house, lad, and I fear—" He did not finish, but turned instead to Obid Dawkin who had joined them. "What say you, Obid?" he questioned.

"I say as you, master," replied Obid in his thin, rusty voice. "And 'tis the work of the heathens, I doubt not. But whose house

it may be I do not know, for it seems too much east to be any in Sudbury, and — "

"And how far, think you? "

"Maybe four miles, sir, or maybe but two. 'Tis hard to say."

"Three, then, Obid: and that brings us to Master William Vernham's, for none other lies in that direction and so near. Whether it be set afire by the Indians we shall know in time. But don your clothing, for there may be work for us, although I misdoubt that we arrive in time."

"And may I go with you, father? " asked David eagerly.

"Nay, lad, for we must travel fast and 'twill be hard going. Do you bolt well the door when we are gone and then go back to bed. 'Tis nigh on three already and 'twill soon be dawn. Art ready, Obid? "

"Nay, for Sathan has hidden my breeches, Master Lindall," grumbled the man, "and without breeches I will not venture forth."

"Do you find them quickly or a clout upon your thick skull may aid you," responded Nathan Lindall grimly.

"I have them, master," piped Obid hurriedly.

"Look, sir, the fire is dying out," said

David. "The sky is far less red, I think."

"Maybe 'tis but a wild-goose chase we go on," replied his father, "and yet 'tis best to go. David, do you slip down and set out the muskets and see that there be ammunition to hand. Doubtless in time this jabbering knave will be clothed."

"I be ready now, master! And as for jabbering —"

"Cease, cease, and get you down!"

A minute or two later David watched their forms melt into the darkness beyond the barn. Then, closing the door, he shot home the heavy iron bolt and dropped the stout oak bar as well. In the wide chimney-place a few live embers glowed amidst the gray ashes and he coaxed them to life with the bellows and dropped splinters of resinous pine upon them until a cheery fire was crackling there. Then, rubbing out the lighted knot against the stones of the hearth, he drew a bench to the blaze and warmed himself, for the night, although May was a week old, was chill.

The room, which took up the whole lower floor of the house, was nearly square, perhaps six paces one way by seven the other. The ceiling was low, so low that Nathan

Lindall's head but scantily escaped the rough-hewn beams. The furnishings would to-day be rude and scanty, but in the year 1675 they were considered proper and sufficient. In fact Nathan Lindall's dwelling was rather better furnished than most of its kind. The table and the two benches flanking it had been fashioned in Boston by the best cabinet-maker in the Colony. The four chairs were comfortable and sightly, the chest of drawers was finely carved and had come over from England, and the few articles that were of home manufacture were well and strongly made. Six windows, guarded by heavy shutters, gave light to the room, and one end was almost entirely taken up by the wide chimney-place. At the other end a steep flight of steps led to the room above, no more than an attic under the high sloping roof.

David had lived in the house seven years, and he was now sixteen, a tall, well-made boy with pleasing countenance and ways which, for having dwelt so long on the edge of the wilderness, were older than his age warranted. His father had taken up his grant of one hundred acres in 1668, removing from the Plymouth Colony after the death of his

wife. David's recollection of his mother was undimmed in spite of the more than eight years that had passed, but, as he had been but a small lad at the time of her death, his memory of her, unlike his father's, held little pain. The grant, part woodland and part meadow, lay sixteen miles from Boston and north of Natick. It was a pleasant tract, with much fine timber and a stream which, rising in a spring-fed pond not far from the house, meandered southward and ultimately entered the Charles River. The river lay a long mile to the east and was the highway on which they traveled, whether to Boston or Dedham.

Nathan Lindall had brought some forty acres of his land under cultivation, and for the wheat, corn, and potatoes that he raised found a ready market in Boston.

The household consisted of Nathan Lindall, David, and Obid Dawkin. Obid had come to the Colony many years before as a "bond servant," had served his term and then hired to Master Lindall. In England he had been a school-teacher, although of small attainments, and now to his duties of helping till and sow and harvest was added that of instructing David. Considering the lack of books, he had done none so badly, and David

possessed more of an education than was common in those days for a boy of his position. It may be said of Obid that he was a better farmer than teacher and a better cook than either!

It was a lonely life that David led, although he was never lonesome. There was work and study always, and play at times. His play was hunting and fishing and fashioning things with the few rude tools at hand. Of hunting there was plenty, for at that time and for many years later eastern Massachusetts abounded in animals and birds valuable for food as well as many others sought for pelt or plumage. Red deer were plentiful, and beyond the Sudbury Marshes only the winter before some of the Natick Indians had slain a moose of gigantic size. Wolves caused much trouble to those who kept cattle or sheep, and in Dedham a bounty of ten shillings had lately been offered for such as were killed within the town. Foxes, both red and gray, raccoons, porcupines, woodchucks, and rabbits were numerous, while the ponds and streams supplied beavers, muskrats, and otters. Bears there were, as well, and sometimes panthers; and many lynxes and martens. Turkeys, grouse, and pigeons were

common, the latter flying in flocks of many hundreds. Geese, swans, ducks, and cranes and many smaller birds frequented streams and marshes, and there were trout in the brooks and bass, pickerel, and perch in the ponds. At certain seasons the alewives ascended the streams in thousands and were literally scooped from the water to be used as fertilizer.

There was, therefore, no dearth of flesh for food nor skins for clothing so long as one could shoot a gun, set a trap, or drop a hook. Of traps David had many, and the south end of the house was never without several skins in process of curing. Larger game had fallen to his prowess, for he had twice shot a bear and once a panther: the skins of these lay on the floor in evidence. He was a good shot, but there was scant virtue in that at a time when the use of the musket, both for hunting and for defense against the Indians, was universal amongst the settlers. Rather, he prided himself on his skill in the making of traps and snowshoes and such things as were needed about the house. He had clever hands for such work. He could draw, too, not very skillfully, but so well that Obid could distinguish at the first glance which was the pig

and which the ox! And at such times his teacher would grumblingly regret that his talent did not run more to the art of writing. But, since Obid's own signature looked more like a rat's nest than an autograph, the complaint came none too well.

Sitting before the fire to-night, David followed in thought the journey of his father and Obid and wished himself with them. Nathan Lindall had spoken truly when he had predicted hard going, for the ice, which still lay in the swamps because of an unseasonable spell of frost the week gone, was too thin to bear one and the trail to Master Vernham's must keep to the high ground and the longer distance. The three miles, David reflected, would become four ere the men reached their destination, and in the darkness the ill-defined trail through the woods would be hard to follow. It was far easier to sit here at home, toasting his knees, but no boy of sixteen will choose ease before adventure, and the possibility of the fire having been set by the Indians suggested real adventure.

A year and more ago such a possibility would have been little considered, for the tribes had been long at peace with the col-

onists, but to-day matters were changed. It had been suspected for some time that Pometacom, or King Philip, as he was called, sachem of the Wampanoags, was secretly unfriendly toward the English. Indeed, nearly four years since he had been summoned to Taunton and persuaded to sign articles of submission, which he did with apparent good grace, but with secret dissatisfaction. Real uneasiness on the part of the English was not bred, however, until the year before our story. Then Sassamon, a Massachusett Indian who had become a convert of John Eliot's at the village of Praying Indians at Natick, brought word to Plymouth of intended treachery by Philip. Sassamon had been with Philip at Mount Hope acting as his interpreter. Philip had learned of Sassamon's treachery and had caused his death. Three Indians suspected of killing Sassamon were apprehended, tried, convicted, and, in June of the following year, executed. Of the three one was a counselor of Philip's, and the latter, although avoiding any acts of hostility pending the court's decision, was bitterly resentful and began to prepare for war. During the winter various annoyances had been visited upon the settlers by roaming

Indians. In some cases the savages were known to be Wampanoags; in other cases the friendly Indians of the villages and settlements were suspected, perhaps often unjustly. Even John Eliot's disciples at Natick did not escape suspicion. Rumors of threatening signs were everywhere heard. Exaggerated stories of Indian depredations traveled about the sparsely settled districts. From the south came the tale of disaffection amongst the Narragansetts, and from the north like rumors regarding the Abenakis. There was a feeling of alarm everywhere amongst the English, and even in Boston there were timorous souls who feared an attack on that town. As yet, however, nothing untoward had occurred in the Massachusetts-Bay Colony, and the only Indians that David knew were harmless and frequently rather sorry-looking specimens who led a precarious existence by trading furs with the English or who dwelt in the village at Natick. Most of them were Nipmucks, although other neighboring tribes were represented as well. Save that they not infrequently stole from his traps — sometimes taking trap as well as catch — David knew nothing to the discredit of the Indians. Often they came to the house,

more often he ran across them on the river or in the forest. Always they were friendly. One or two he counted as friends; Monapikot, a Pegan youth of near his own age who dwelt at Natick, and Mattatanopet, or Joe Tanopet as he was known, who came and went as it pleased him, bartering skins for food and tobacco, and who claimed to be the son of a Wamesit chief; a claim very generally discredited. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that David added a good seasoning of salt to the tales of Indian unfriendliness, nor that to-night he was little inclined to lay the burning of William Vernham's house at the door of the savages.

And yet, since where there is much smoke there must be some fire, he realized that Obid's surmise might hold more than prejudice. Obid was firmly of the belief that the Indian was little if any better than the beast of the forest and had no sympathy with the Reverend John Eliot's earnest endeavors to convert them to Christianity, arguing that an Indian had no soul and that none, not even John Eliot, could save what didn't exist! Nathan Lindall held opposite views both of the Indian and of John Eliot's efforts, and many a long and warm argument took place

about the fire of a winter evening, while David, longing to champion his father's contentions, maintained the silence becoming one of his years.

The fire dwindled and David presently became aware of the chill, and, yawning, climbed the stair and sought his bed with many shivers at the touch of the cold clothing. A fox barked in the distance, but save for that all was silent. Northward the red glow had faded from the sky and the blacker darkness that precedes the first sign of dawn wrapped the world.

CHAPTER II

THE MEETING IN THE WOODS

It was broad daylight when David awoke, rudely summoned from slumber by the loud tattoo on the door below. He tumbled sleepily down the stair and admitted his father and Obid, their boots wet with the dew that hung sparkling in the pale sunlight from every spray of sedge and blade of grass. While Obid, setting aside his musket, began the preparation of breakfast, David questioned his father.

"By God's favor 'twas not the house, David, but the barn and a goodly store of hay that was burned. Fortunately these were far enough away so that the flames but scorched the house. Master Vernham and the servants drew water from the well and so kept the roof wet. The worst of it was over ere we arrived. Some folks from the settlement at Sudbury came also: John Longstaff and a Master Warren, of Salem, who is on a visit there, and two Indians."

"How did the fire catch, sir?" asked David.

"'Twas set," replied Nathan Lindall grimly. "Indians were seen skulking about the woods late in the afternoon, and 'tis thought they were some that have set up their wigwams above the Beaver Pond since autumn."

"But why, sir?"

"I know not, save that Master Vernham tells me that of late they have shown much insolence and have frequently come to his house begging for food and cloth. At first he gave, but soon their importunity wearied him and he refused. They are, he says, a povern and worthless lot; renegade Mohegans he thinks. But dress yourself, lad, and be about your duties."

Shortly after the midday meal, Nathan Lindall and Obid again set forth, this time taking the Sudbury path, and David, left to his own devices, finished the ploughing of the south field which was later to be sown to corn, and then, unyoking the oxen and returning them to the barn, he took his gun and made his way along the little brook toward the swamp woods. The afternoon, half gone, was warm and still, and a bluish haze lay over the distant hills to the southeast. A rabbit sprang up from almost be-

neath his feet as he entered the white birch and alder thicket, but he forbore to shoot, since its flesh was not esteemed as food and the pelt was too soft for use at that season of the year. For that matter, there was little game worth the taking in May, and David had brought his gun with him more from force of habit than aught else. It was enough to be abroad on such a day, for the spring was waking the world and it seemed that he could almost see the tender young leaves of the white birches unfold. Birds chattered and sang as he skirted the marsh and approached the deeper forest beyond. A chestnut stump had been clawed but recently by a bear in search of the fat white worms that dwelt in the decaying wood, and David found the prints of the beast's paws and followed them until they became lost in the swamp. Turning back, his ears detected the rustling of feet on the dead leaves a few rods distant, and he paused and peered through the greening forest. After a moment an Indian came into view, a rather thick-set, middle-aged savage with a round countenance. He wore the English clothes save that his feet were fitted to moccasins instead of shoes and had no doublet above a frayed

and stained waistcoat that had once been bright green. Nor did he wear any hat, but, instead, three blue feathers woven into his hair. He carried a bow and arrows and a hunting-knife hung at his girdle. A string of wampum encircled his neck. That he had seen David as soon as David had seen him was evident, for his hand was already raised in greeting.

"'Tis you, Tanopet," called David. "For the moment I took you for the bear that has been dining at yonder stump."

"Aye," grunted the Indian, approaching. "Greeting, brother. Where see bear?"

David explained, Joe Tanopet listening gravely the while. Then, "No good," he said. "No catch um in swamp. What shoot, David?" He pointed to the boy's musket.

"Nothing, Joe. I brought gun along for friend to talk to. Where you been so long? You haven't been here since winter."

Tanopet's gaze wandered and he waved a hand vaguely. "Me go my people," he answered. "All very glad see me. Make feast, make dance, make good time."

"Is your father Big Chief still living, Joe?"

"Aye, but um very old. Soon um die.

Then Joe be chief. How your father, David?"

"Well, I thank you; and so is Obid."

Joe Tanopet scowled and spat.

"Um little man talk foolish, no good. You see fire last night?"

"Aye. Father and Obid Dawkin went to give aid, but the flames were out when they reached Master Vernham's. They say that the fire was set, Joe."

"Aye."

"They suspect some Indians who have been living near the Beaver Pond," continued David questioningly.

Joe Tanopet shook his head. "Not Beaver Pond people."

"Who then, Joe?"

"Maybe Manitou make fire," replied the Indian evasively.

"Man *or* two, rather," laughed David. "Anyhow, father and Obid have gone to Sudbury where they are to confer with others, and I fear it may go hard with the Beaver Pond Indians. How do you know that they did not set the fire, Joe?"

"Me know. You tell father me say."

"Aye, but with no more proof than that I fear 'twill make little difference," answered

the boy dubiously. "Joe, they say that there are many strange Indians in the forest this spring; that Mohegans have been seen as far north as Meadfield. Is it true?"

"Me no see um Mohegans. Me see um Wampanoags. Me see um Niantiks. Much trouble soon. Maybe when leaves on trees."

"Trouble? You mean King Philip?"

"Aye. Him bite um nails long time. Him want um fight. Him great sachem. Him got many friends. Much trouble in summer." Tanopet gazed past David as though seeing a vision in the shadowed forest beyond. "Big war soon, but no good. English win. Philip listen bad counsel. Um squaw Wootonekanuske tell um fight. Um Peebe tell um fight. All um powwows tell um make war. Tell um drive English into sea, no come back here. All um lands belong Indians once more. Philip um think so too. No good. Wampanoags big fools. Me know."

"I hope you are mistaken, Joe, for such a war would be very foolish and very wrong. That Philip has cause for complaint against the Plymouth Colony I do not doubt, but it is true, too, my father says, that he has failed to abide by the promises he made. As for driving the English out of the country, that

is indeed an idle dream, for now that the Colonies are leagued together their strength of arms is too great. Not all the Indian Nations combined could bring that about. Philip should take warning of what happened to the Pequots forty years ago."

"Um big war," grunted Tanopet. "Many Indians die. Joe um little boy, but um see. Indians um fight arrow and spear, but now um fight guns. English much kind to Indian. Um sell um gun, um sell um bullet, um sell um powder." Tanopet's wrinkled face was slyly ironical. "Philip got plenty guns, plenty bullet."

"But how can that be, Joe? 'Tis but four years gone that his guns were taken from him."

"Um catch more maybe. Maybe um not give up all guns. Good-bye."

Tanopet made a sign of farewell, turned and strode lightly away into the darkening forest, and David, his gun across his shoulder, sought his home, his thoughts busy with what the Indian had said. Joe Tanopet was held trustworthy by the colonists thereabouts, and, since he was forever on the move and having discourse with Indians of many tribes, it might well be that his words

were worthy of consideration. For the first time David found reason to fear that the dismal prophecies of Obid Dawkin might come true. He determined to tell his father of Tanopet's talk when he returned.

But when David reached the house, he found only Obid there, preparing supper.

"Master Lindall will not be back until the morrow," explained Obid. "He and Master Vernham have gone to Boston with four Indians that we made prisoners of, and who, I pray, will be hung to the gallows-tree."

"Prisoners!" exclaimed David. "Mean you that there has been fighting, then?"

"Fighting? Nay, the infidels had no stomach for fighting. They surrendered themselves readily enough, I promise, when they saw in what force we had come. But some had already gone away, doubtless having warning of our intention, and only a handful were there when we reached their village. Squaws and children mostly, they were, and there was great howling and dismay when we burned the wigwams."

"But is it known, Obid, that it was indeed they who did the mischief to Master Vernham's place?"

"Well enough, Master David. They made

denial, but so they would in any case, and always do. One brave who appeared to be their leader — his name is Noosawah, an I have it right — told a wild tale of strange Indians from the north and how they had been seen near the High Hill two days since, and proclaimed his innocence most loudly."

"And might he not have been telling the truth?"

"'Tis thought not, Master David. At least, it was deemed best to disperse them, for they were but a Gypsy-sort and would not say plainly from whence they came."

"It sounds not just," protested David. "Indeed, Obid, 'tis such acts that put us English in the wrong and give grounds for complaint to the savages. And now, when, by all accounts, there is ill-feeling enough, I say that it was badly done."

Obid snorted indignantly. "Would you put your judgment against that of your father and Master Vernham and such men of wisdom as John Grafton, of Sudbury, and Richard Wight, Master David?"

"I know not," answered David troubledly. "And yet it seems to me that a gentler policy were better. It may be that we shall need all the friends we can secure before many months, Obid."

"Aye, but trustworthy friends, not these Sons of Sathan who offer peace with one hand and hide a knife in t'other! An I were this Governor Leverett I would not wait, I promise you, for the savages to strike the first blow, but would fall upon them with all the strength of the united Colonies and drive the ungodly creatures from the face of the earth."

"Then it pleases me well that you are not he," laughed David as he sat himself to the table. "But tell me, Obid, what of the Indians that father and Master Vernham are taking to Boston? Surely they will not execute them on such poor evidence!"

"Nay," grumbled Obid, "they will doubtless be sold into the West Indies."

"Sold as slaves? A hard sentence, methinks. And the women and children, what of them? You say the village was burned?"

"Aye, to the ground; and a seemly work, too. The squaws and the children and a few young men made off as fast as they might. I doubt they will be seen hereabouts again," he concluded grimly. "For my part, I hold that Master Lindall and the rest were far too lenient, since they took but four prisoners, they being the older men, and let all others

go free. I thought to see Master Vernham use better wisdom, but 'tis well known that he has much respect for Preacher Eliot, and doubtless hearkened to his intercessions. If this Eliot chooses to waste his time teaching the gospel to the savages, 'tis his own affair, perchance, but 'twould be well for him to refrain from interfering with affairs outside his villages. Mark my words, Master David: if trouble comes with Philip's Indians these wastrel hypocrites of Eliot's will be murdering us in our beds so soon as they get the word."

"That I do not believe," answered David stoutly.

"An your scalp dangles some day from the belt of one of these same Praying Indians you will believe," replied Obid dryly.

Nathan Lindall returned in the afternoon from Boston and heard David's account of his talk with Joe Tanopet in silence. Nathan Lindall was a large man, well over six feet in height and broad of shoulder, and David promised to equal him for size ere he stopped his growth. A quiet man he was, with calm brown eyes deeply set and a grave countenance, who could be stern when occasion warranted, but who was at heart, as David

well knew, kind and even tender. He wore his hair shorter than was then the prevailing fashion, and his beard longer. His father, for whom David was named, had come to the Plymouth Colony from Lincolnshire, England, in 1625, by profession a ship's-carpenter, and had married a woman of well-to-do family in the Colony, thereafter setting up in business there. Both he and his wife were now dead, and of their children, a son and daughter, only David's father remained. The daughter had married William Elkins, of Boston, and there had been one child, Raph, who still lived with his father near the King's Head Tavern. When David had ended his recital, his father shook his head as one in doubt.

"You did well to tell me, David," he said. "It may be that Tanopet speaks the truth and that we are indeed destined to suffer strife with the Indians, though I pray not. In Boston I heard much talk of it, and there are many there who fear for their safety. I would that I had myself spoken with Tanopet. Whither did he go?"

"I do not know, father. Should I meet him again I will bid him see you."

"Do so, for I doubt not he could tell much

were he minded to, and whether Philip means well or ill we shall be the better for knowing. So certain are some of the settlers to the south that war is brewing, according to your Uncle William — with whom I spent the night in Boston — that they even hesitate to plant their fields this spring. Much foolish and ungodly talk there is of strange portents, too, with which I havē no patience. Well, we shall see what we shall see, my son, and meanwhile there is work to be done. Did you finish the south field? "

"Yes, father. The soil is yet too wet for good ploughing save on the higher places. What of the Indians you took to Boston, sir? Obid prays that they be hung, but I do not, since it seems to me that none has proven their guilt."

"They will be justly tried, David. If deemed guilty they will doubtless be sold for slaves. A harsher punishment would be fitter, I think, for this is no time to quibble. Stern measures alone have weight with the Indians, so long as Justice dictates them. Now be off to your duties ere it be too dark."

CHAPTER III

DOWN THE WINDING RIVER

A FORTNIGHT later David set out early one morning for Boston to make purchases. Warm and dry weather had made fit the soil for ploughing and tilling, and Nathan Lindall and Obid were up to their necks in work, and of the household David could best be spared. He was to lodge overnight with his Uncle William Elkins and return on the morrow. The sun was just showing above the trees to the eastward when he left the house and made his way along the path that led to the river. He wore his best doublet, as was befitting the occasion, but for the rest had clothed himself for the journey rather than for the visit in the town. His musket lay in the hollow of his arm and a leather bag slung about his shoulder held both ammunition and food.

His spirits were high as he left the clearing behind and entered the winding path through the forest of pines and hemlocks, maples and beeches. The sunlight filtered through the upper branches and laid a pattern of pale

gold on the needle-carpeted ground. Birds sang about him, and presently a covey of partridges whirred into air beyond a beech thicket. It was good to be alive on such a morning, and better still to be adventuring, and David's heart sang as he strode blithely along. The voyage down the river would be pleasant, the town held much to excite interest, and the visit to his uncle and cousin would be delightful. He only wished that his stay in the town was to be longer, for he and Raph, who was two years his elder, were firm friends, and the infrequent occasions spent with his cousin were always the most enjoyable of his life. This morning he refused to think of the trip back when, with a laden canoe, he would have to toil hard against the current. The immediate future was enough. Midges were abroad and attacked him bloodthirstily, but he plucked a hemlock spray and fought them off until, presently, the path ended at the bank of the river, here narrow and swift and to-day swollen with the spring freshets. Concealed under the trees near by lay a bark canoe and a pair of paddles, and David soon had the craft afloat and, his gun and bag at his feet, was guiding it down the stream.

The sun was well up by the time he had passed the first turns and entered the lake above Nonantum which was well over a half-mile in width, although it seemed less because of a large island that lay near its lower end. There were several deserted wigwams built of poles and bark on the shores of the island, left by Indians who a few years before had dwelt there to fish. David used his paddle now, for the current was lost when the river widened, and, keeping close to the nearer shore, glided from sunlight to shadow, humming a tune as he went. Once he surprised a young deer drinking where a meadow stretched down to the river, and was within a few rods of him before he took alarm and went bounding into a coppice. Again the river narrowed and he laid the paddle over the side as a rudder. A clearing running well back from the stream showed a dwelling of logs, and a yellow-and-white dog barked at him from beside the doorway. Then the tall trees closed in again and the swift water was shadowed and looked black beneath the banks.

At noon, then well below the settlement at Watertown, David turned toward the shore and ran the bow of the canoe up on a

little pebbly beach and ate the provender he had brought. It was but bread and meat, but hunger was an excellent sauce for it, and with draughts of water scooped from the river in his hand it was soon finished. Then, because there was no haste needed and because the sunshine was warm and pleasant, he leaned back and dreamily watched the white clouds float overhead, borne on a gentle southwesterly breeze. Behind him the narrow beach ended at a bank whereon alders and willows and low trees made a thin hedge that partly screened the wide expanse of fresh green meadow that here followed the river for more than five miles. Through it meandered little brooks between muddy banks, and here and there a rounded island of clustered oaks or maples stood above the level of the marsh. Swallows darted and from near at hand a kingfisher cried harshly. David's dreaming was presently disturbed by the faint but unmistakable *swish* of paddles and he raised his head just as a canoe rounded a turn downstream.

The craft held three Indians, of whom two, paddling at bow and stern, were naked to the waist save for beads and amulets worn about the neck. The one who sat in the center was

clothed in a garb that combined picturesquely the Indian and the English fashions. Deerskin trousers, a shirt of blue cotton cloth, and a soft leather jacket made his attire. He wore no ornaments, nor was his bare head adorned in any way. A musket lay across his knees and a long-stemmed pipe of red clay was held to his lips. Before him were several bundles. At sight of David he raised a hand and then spoke to his companions, and the canoe left the middle of the stream and floated gently up to the marge. David jumped eagerly from his own craft and made toward the other.

"Pikot!" he called joyfully. "I had begun to think you were lost. 'Tis moons since I saw you last."

"The heart sees when the eyes cannot," replied the Indian, smiling, as he leaped to the beach and shook hands. "Often I have said, 'To-morrow I will take the Long Marsh trail and visit my brother David'; but there has been much work at the village all through the winter, and the to-morrows I sought did not come. Where do you go, my brother?"

"To Boston to buy seeds and food and many things, Straight Arrow. And you?"

"To Natick with some goods for Master

Eliot that came from across the sea by ship. All has been well with you, David?"

"Aye, but I am glad indeed that the winter is over. I like it not. They say that in Virginia the winters are neither so long nor so severe, and I sometimes wish that we dwelt there instead."

The Indian shook his head. "I know not of Virginia, but I know that my people who live in the North are greater and stronger and wiser than they who dwell in the South. 'Tis the cold of winter that makes strong and lean bodies. In summer we lose our strength and become fat, wherefore God divides the seasons wisely. I have something to say to you, David. Come a little way along the shore where it may not be overheard."

David followed, viewing admiringly the straight, slim figure of his friend. Monapikot was a Pegan Indian. The Pegans were one of the smaller tribes of the Abenakis who lived southward in the region of Chaubunagunamog. He was perhaps three years David's senior and had been born at Natick in the village of the Praying Indians. Although scarcely more than a lad in years, he was already one of Master Eliot's most trusted

disciples and had recently become a teacher. He spoke English well and could read it fairly. He and David had been friends ever since shortly after the latter's arrival in that vicinity, at which time David had been a boy of nine years and Pikot twelve. They had hunted together and lost themselves together in the Long Marsh, and had had the usual adventures and misadventures falling to the lot of boys whether they be white or red. For the last three years, though, Pikot's duties had held him closer to the village and their meetings had been fewer. The Indian was a splendid-looking youth, tall and straight — for which David had once dubbed him Straight Arrow — with hard, lean muscles and a gracefulness that was like the swaying litheness of a panther. His features were exceptional for one of a tribe not usually endowed with good looks, for his forehead was broad, his eyes well apart, and his whole countenance indicated nobility. His gaze was direct and candid, and, which was unusual in his people, his mouth curved slightly upward at the corners, giving him a less grave expression than most Indians showed. Perhaps David had taught him to laugh, or, at least, to smile, for he did so fre-

quently. Had there been more like Monapikot amongst the five-score converts that dwelt in Natick, there might well have been a more universal sympathy toward John Eliot's efforts.

"When we were little," began Pikot after they had placed a hundred strides between them and the two Indians in the canoe, "you brought me safe from the water of the Great Pond when I would have drowned, albeit you were younger and smaller than I, my brother."

"Yes, 'tis true, Pikot, but the squirrel is ever more clever than the woodchuck. Besides, then the woodchuck snared himself in a sunken tree root and, having not the sense to gnaw himself free, must needs call on the squirrel for aid."

Pikot assented, but did not smile at the other's nonsense. Instead, he laid one slim bronze-red hand against his heart. "You saved the life of Monapikot and he does not forget. Some day he will save the life of David just so."

"What? Then I shall keep out of the water, Straight Arrow! I doubt not you would bring me ashore as I brought you, but

suppose you happened not to be by? Nay, I'll take no risks, thank you!"

"I know not in what way you will be in danger," answered the Pegan gravely. "But thrice I have dreamed the same dream, and in the dream 'tis as I have told."

"Methinks your dreams smack of this witchcraft of which we hear so much of late," said David slyly, "and belong not to that religion that you teach, Pikot."

"Nay, for the Bible tells much of dreams. Did not Joseph, when sold by his wicked brothers in Egypt, tell truly what meant the dreams of the great King? My people in such way tell their dreams to the powwows, and the powwows explain them. It may be that dreams are the whisperings of the Great Spirit. But listen, my brother, to a matter that is of greater moment. Fifteen days ago your father and Master Vernham made captive three Indians and took them to Boston where they now wait judgment of the court. One is named Nausauwah, a young brave who is a son of Woosonametipom, whose lands are westward by the Lone Hill."

"But my father thinks that they are Mohegans, Pikot."

"Nay, they are Wachoosetts. Nausauwah

quarreled with Woosonametipom and came hither in the fall with four tens of his people. He is a lazy man and thought to find food amongst the English. Now, albeit the Sachem Woosonametipom did not try to hinder Nausauwah from leaving the lodge of his people, he is angry at what he has heard and says that he will come with all his warriors to Boston and recover his son. That is but boasting, for albeit he is a great sachem and has many warriors under him, and can count on the Quaboags to aid him, mayhap, he would not dare. But he has sworn a vengeance against these who have taken his son, David, and I fear he will seek to harm your father and Master Vernham. Do not ask me where I have learned this, but give warning to your father and be ever on your guard."

"Thank you, Straight Arrow. My father and Master William Vernham, though, had no more to do with the taking of this Nausauwah than many others. It but so happened that they were chosen to convey the captives to the authorities in Boston. What means, think you, this Metipom will seek to get vengeance?"

"He is not friendly to the English, my brother, and it may be that he will be glad

of this reason to travel swiftly from his mountain home and make pillage. But 'tis more likely that he will send a few young men eager to win honor by returning with English scalps. Go not abroad alone, David, and see that the house be well secured at nightfall. The Wachoosetts are forest Indians and swift and sly, and I fear for your safety. It would be well to travel back in company with another, or else to take a party of Indians with you and see that they are armed with guns. Should Woosonametipom's braves learn of your journey, I fear they would make the most of it. I would I could stay by you, but I must go on my way at once."

"But surely they would not dare their deviltry so near the plantations!"

"Who knows?" Monapikot lapsed into the Indian tongue, which David understood a little and could speak haltingly to the extent of being understood. "The fox takes the goose where he finds him."

"Then I will be no goose, Straight Arrow, but rather the dog who slays the fox," laughed David.

Pikot smiled faintly. "You will ever be Noawama, He Who Laughs, my brother.

But see that while you laugh you close not your eyes. Now I must go, for Master Eliot awaits what I bring."

"I will see you again soon, Pikot, for the fish are hungry and none can coax them to the hook as you can."

"And none eat them as you can!" chuckled Pikot. "Within seven sleeps I will visit you and we will take food and go to the Long Pond. Farewell, my brother."

"Farewell, Pikot. May your food do you much good."

Monapikot stepped into his canoe, the Indians grunted and pushed off, and David, waving, watched the craft out of sight. Then he launched his own canoe and again took up his journey. Pikot's warning held his thoughts, although it did not seem to him that this Wachoosett sagamore would dare dispatch his assassins so far into the plantations. As for any danger on the river, he smiled at that. Already the village of Newtowne, a good-sized settlement with many proper houses and a mile-long fenced enclosure about it, was in sight on the left of the river, and Boston itself was but a good four miles distant. But David told himself that Pikot's fears might have ground and

that for a while at least it would be best to be cautious. As soon as he returned home he would repeat the Indian's warning. He smiled as he reflected on the alarm that it would bring to Obid Dawkin.

In the early afternoon, skirting the mud flats and oyster banks below the town, he made landing at Blackstone's Point, giving his canoe into custody of an Indian who dwelt in a hut close upon the water, and made his way up the hill, there being nothing in the way of a road save a cart track that wound deviously. His way led him presently along the slope of Valley Acre and thence into Hanover Street above where stood the house that had been the home of Governor Endicott before his death ten years ago. To David the sights and sounds of Boston were engaging indeed, and it took him the better part of an hour to complete his journey afoot. Many windows must be looked into that he might feast his eyes on the goods for sale within, and the signs hanging above the narrow streets were a never-failing source of interest. Even the sober-visaged citizens held his footsteps while he amused himself in wondering about them. There were strangers to be met as well, and these could be easily

distinguished, not only by their dress, but by the more cheerful countenances that they wore: ship's captains and rolling-gaited sailors redolent of tar and, he feared, rum as well; Negroes and an occasional Indian; dark men who wore gold rings in their ears. But in the end he turned down toward the shore and so into Ship Street and saw the swinging sign of the King's Head Tavern ahead and was presently beating a gay tattoo on the portal of Master William Elkins, Merchant.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPOTTED ARROW

The rest of that day passed quickly and enjoyably, for Raph Elkins took David under his wing and, until it was time for the evening meal, the two lads viewed the town and loitered along the shore and wharves where many ships were at anchor. Fascinating odors filled their nostrils and romantic sights held them enthralled. Perhaps Raph was less engaged than David, for he was more accustomed to the shipping, but he enjoyed his cousin's pleasure and through it found a new enthusiasm. To David the sea and the ships that sailed it had ever held a strong appeal, and secretly he entertained the longing that most boys have for the feel of a swaying deck and for all the exciting adventures that were supposed to befall — and frequently did — the hardy mariners of those days. Piracy was still a popular trade in southern waters, and Teach and Bradish and Bellamy, and even the renowned William Kidd, were names to bring a romantic flutter

to the heart of a healthy lad. Whether, could he have had his way, David would have cast his lot with the privateers — who were but pirates under a more polite title — or with those who sought to suppress them, I do not know!

When they returned to the house, Master William Elkins had returned and they sat down to supper. David's uncle was a somewhat pompous man of forty-odd, very proper as to dress and deportment, and who ruled his household with a stern hand. Yet withal he was kind of heart and secretly held David in much affection. Since his wife's death the domestic affairs had been looked after by a certain Mistress Fairdaye, who occupied a position midway between that of servant and housewife, taking her meals with the family and ruling in her own realm quite as inflexibly as Master Elkins commanded over all. David often pitied Raph, for what between his father and Mistress Fairdaye he spent what seemed to the younger lad a very dreary and suppressed existence. But Raph appeared not to mind it. Indeed, unlike David, he had little of the adventurous in his make-up and restraint did not irk him. He was a rather thick-set youth, quiet in manner and

even sober, having doubtless found little to make him otherwise in his staid life. Yet when David was about he could be quite lively and would enter into their mild adventures with a fair grace.

Supper was a serious affair at Master Elkins's. After the blessing had been asked, they set to in a silence that was seldom broken until the meal was at an end. David, who had experienced too much excitement to be heartily hungry, was finished before the rest and thereafter amused himself by kicking Raph's shins beneath the table, maintaining an innocence of countenance that threw no light on the squirmings of his cousin who, in an effort to avoid punishment, called down a reprimand from his father for his unseemly antics.

The rest of the evening was spent in conversation, David delivering some messages to his uncle from his father and recounting the warning given by Monapikot and, in return, listening to a lengthy discourse on the political affairs of the Colony, much of which he did not comprehend. It was decided, though, by Master Elkins that David was not to make the return journey alone, but that three of the town Indians should accompany

him. David took no pleasure from the decision, for, as toilsome as the trip would have been, he had looked forward to it eagerly, anxious to put his strength and endurance to the test. But his uncle was not one to be disputed and David agreed to the arrangement with the best face he could. Bedtime came early, but, after he and Raph had put out the candle in the little sloping-roofed room at the top of the house, they talked for a long while. Even then it was Raph who first dropped off to slumber, and David lay for some time more quite wide awake in the darkness, watching through the little small-paned window the twinkling lights on the ships in the town cove.

His purchases were made by mid-morning and at a little after ten o'clock Raph accompanied him to Blackstone's Point whither the porters from the stores had borne his goods and where three stolid and unattractive Indians were awaiting. Raph bade him farewell and repeated a promise to visit him in the summer, and the canoe, propelled by two of the savages, began its return voyage. Since but one of his copper-skinned companions carried a weapon, a battered flintlock, David could not see that he was much safer

from attack by hostiles than if he had made the journey alone. The armed savage was known as Isaac Trot, whatever his real name may have been, and was an ancient, watery-eyed Massachusett, one of the few remaining remnants of that once numerous tribe. He squatted forward of David, his gun across his knees, and, save for a grunted word of direction to the paddlers, gave all his attention to his pipe.

At noon they stopped for dinner, by which time they had reached the rapids near Watertown. Going down David had shot the rapids without difficulty, no hard task in an empty canoe, but now it was necessary to carry, and so when the food had been eaten, the bundles were lifted from the craft and they set out by the well-trodden path that skirted the river. David shared the burdens, taking for his load a sack of wheat for seeding and his gun. Isaac shouldered the canoe and the other two Indians managed the rest. David, well aware of the Indian weakness for thievery, watched attentively, and yet, when the canoe was again loaded above the rapids, one package was missing. He faced Isaac sternly.

"There were eight pieces, Isaac," he said.

"Now there are but seven. Go back and catchum other piece."

Isaac looked stupidly about the canoe and the ground, puffing leisurely on his pipe. At last: "No seeum," he said stolidly.

"Go look," commanded David. Then he pointed to the others. "You go look too. Catchum bundle or you catchum licking."

Isaac shook his head. "Seven pieces," he declared. "All there, master."

"No, there were eight when we started," replied the boy firmly. "You find the other one or you'll go to jail, Isaac. All three go to jail. *Quog quash!* Hurry!"

Isaac looked cunningly from David to the others, considering. But something in the boy's face told him he had best produce the missing bundle, and with a grunt he turned back, followed by his companions. Five minutes later they returned, one of the paddlers bearing the bundle. No explanation was offered, nor did David expect any. The package, containing tobacco and cloth, was placed in the canoe and the journey began again. The river was full and the current swift, especially where the banks were close together as was frequently the case between the carry and the lake, and the Indians made

slow progress. David had to acknowledge to himself that he would have found that return trip a hard task, and any lingering resentment felt toward his uncle disappeared. Had he been alone it would have taken him a good half-hour to have moved the goods over the carry, making no less than six trips, while the struggle against the current would doubtless have kept him from reaching home until well after darkness.

They met but three other voyagers on their journey and saw no Indians, friendly or hostile, and just at sunset pulled the canoe to shore and again shouldered the goods. David's father was surprised at sight of the procession that came out of the woods toward the house, but, on hearing the boy's story, agreed that Master Elkins had ordered wisely. The Indians were paid off and given food and tobacco and took themselves away again, while David, in spite of having done but little to earn his passage, fell to on his supper with noble hunger. As he ate — his father and Obid having already supped — he told of his meeting with Monapikot and of the latter's news, and Master Lindall listened in all gravity and Obid Dawkin in unconcealed alarm.

"'Tis as I have told all along," declared Obid, his thin voice more than ever like a rusted wheel in his excitement. "None is safe in his bed so long as these naked murderers be allowed to dwell in the same country! Think you I shall stay here to have my scalp lifted? I give you notice, Master Lindall, that so soon as the porridge be cooked in the morning I take my departure. The dear Lord knows that 'tis little enough hair I have left at best, and that little I would keep, an it please Him! To-morrow morning, Master Lindall! Say not that I failed to give you full notice."

"Be quiet a moment," replied the master calmly. "I must think what best to do. Master Vernham should be acquainted with this so soon as may be, for if it prove true that this Wachoosett sachem means mischief 'tis Master Vernham that, being nigher, they will first assail. Methinks I had best go over there at once and give him warning. You will go with me, Obid?"

Nathan Lindall's eyes twinkled. Obid turned a dour face toward him. "Not I, in sooth, master! The forest has no liking for me since I have heard David's tale."

"Then David shall come and you shall re-

main to guard the house. Perhaps that were better, for should the savages attack while we be gone you will be more able to cope with them than the lad."

Obid's dismay brought a chuckle from David. "Whether I go or stay," he shrilled, "it seems I must be murdered, then! Nay, I will accompany you, for at least in the forest I may have a chance to save myself in flight, whereas an I bide here I must likely burn to death like a rabbit in a brush-heap! But in the morning, master —"

"Twice you have informed me of that, Obid. Get your hat and gun and let us be off, magpie. Mayhap if we haste we can be back before it be fully dark."

Obid obeyed grumblingly, and soon they had set forth, leaving David to make fast the door and windows and await their return.

It would be untrue to say that David felt no uneasiness, but his uneasiness was not fear. Besides his own musket and the two that his father and Obid had taken with them there was a fourth at hand as well as a pistol that, although of uncertain accuracy, could be used if required, and against a few Indians armed only with bows and arrows

he felt more than a match. Small openings at the level of a man's head, and none so greatly above the level of David's, pierced the four walls and from these at intervals the boy peered out. The house was set in a clearing of sufficient area to protect from sudden attack, and from the nearer forest an arrow would fall spent before it reached the dwelling. Even when darkness had settled, the stars gave enough light to have revealed to sharp eyes the presence of a skulking figure. Between watching, David replenished the fire and dipped into one of two books that he had brought back with him, but he was in no mind for settled reading and, when the better part of two hours had passed, heard not without relief the sound of his father's voice at the edge of the wood.

"Master Vernham had already heard rumors of mischief against him," said Nathan Lindall when he had entered, "and we might have spared ourselves the journey. He seems not concerned, but has agreed to observe caution. He thinks the threats came first from the Indians we drove away and are but repeated and adorned as tales ever are. Yet for my part, David, I am not so easy. 'Tis a time of unrest, and for a while it will be

the part of wisdom to stray not far into the forest, and never unarmed. What say you, Obid?"

"I say naught, master. If you choose to bide here and be done to death, 'tis your own matter. But as for me, to-morrow morn I leave!"

"Then 'twere best you fortified yourself with sleep," replied Nathan Lindall dryly, "for the journey is long."

"Sleep, say you! Not a wink of sleep shall I have this night. If die I must 'twill be whilst I'm awake and command all my faculties."

"Think you, Obid," asked David slyly, "that being scalped be the more pleasant for missing no part of it?"

"Peace, David," said his father. "'Tis not seemly to jest on so serious a matter. Be off to bed, lad."

Once in the night David awoke and, listening to the hearty sounds that came from the farther end of the attic, smiled. "Faith," he thought sleepily as he turned over, "if Obid be still awake he has not the sound of it!"

Perhaps sleep brought counsel to Obid, for in the morning there was no more talk

of leaving; though, for that matter, neither Nathan Lindall nor David had taken the servant's threat seriously. Whatever could be said of Obid, he was no coward, while, even if he had been, his devotion to his master would have proved stronger than his timidity. That day all three worked hard in the fields. Although their muskets were ever within reach, no incident caused any alarm. And when a second day had likewise passed uneventfully, even Obid Dawkin grudgingly allowed that maybe the danger was not so present as he had feared. But on the third morning there was another tale to tell when Obid, opening the door to fetch water from the well, dropped his pail and fell back with a groan that brought the others to his side. Obid, white-faced, pointed to the stone step outside. There in the first ray of sunlight lay an arrow wrapped about with the dried skin of a rattlesnake.

CHAPTER V

DAVID VISITS THE PRAYING VILLAGE

"It seems he gives fair warning," said Nathan Lindall quietly as he stooped and lifted the horrid token from the step. The snake-skin rustled as his hand touched it, and Obid, peering over his shoulder, shuddered in disgust. David was already outside, his keen eyes searching the moist ground. A dozen steps he took and then pointed toward the woods to the west.

"Thence he came, sir, and went," he announced.

"One only?" asked his father.

"Aye, though there may have been more beyond the clearing."

"What mean the blue spots on the arrow, master?" asked Obid troubledly.

Nathan Lindall looked at the three stains on the slender shaft and shook his head. "I know not, Obid, unless they be this sachem's signature. Or mayhap they have a more trenchant meaning. What matter? He has put us on our guard, though for what reason I cannot discern."

"Then can I, master," said Obid bitterly. "Murder be enough for the bloody-minded savage, but he must even forewarn us that we may suffer first in anticipation of our fate."

"Nay," said David. "'Tis the Indian way to give challenge, and by so doing fight fairly, Obid. When all is said, father, he has done us a kindness, for now we know of a certainty that he means us harm and we can be more than ever on our guard."

"'Tis a childish play," said Nathan Lindall, "and none but a child would be disturbed thereby." He made as if to break the arrow in his hands, but David spoke quickly.

"Let me have it, father. 'Tis like none other I have seen and I would keep it."

"A pretty keepsake, indeed," muttered Obid, as he went back to his tasks. "Have no fear but that they be waiting to give us plenty more of its like!"

The incident could not fail to cast a shade of gloom over the morning meal, and all three were more silent than usual. Soon after they had finished, there came a hail from the front and Master William Vernham and a servant approached. Their neighbor was a tall, grim-faced man of upwards

of fifty, long of leg and arm, clean-shaven save for the veriest wisp of grizzled hair upon his lip. He bore with him another such arrow as Obid had stumbled upon and was in a fine temper over it.

"On my very doorsill 'twas lain, Master Lindall! Did ever one know of such insolence? What, pray, is the Colony come to when these red devils be allowed to come and go at will, indulging themselves in all manner of mischief and seeking to frighten honest folk with such clownish tricks? Governor Leverett shall know of this ere night, and if he fail to dispatch militia to clear the country hereabouts of the varmints, then I shall call on you, Nathan Lindall, and all others within reach to aid me in the task, for patience is no longer a virtue."

"The task will be no easy one," answered Master Lindall, "for these Indians are but a handful and seeking for them will be like seeking a needle in a haymow. But you may count on me to aid, Master Vernham. As for asking help of the Governor, I fear 'twill be but a waste of time, for we be too far from the towns to cause him concern. 'Twill be best to take the law into our own hands, as you have said."

"Aye, that be true. What disposition, think you, will be made of that Nausauwah that we took prisoner to Boston?"

"I know not. Perchance 'twere best for our heads were he set free with a fine, since, from what I make of it, this Metipom's quarrel with us is on his account."

William Vernham shook his head stoutly. "Nay, that were truckling with the villains. Rather shall I beg the Governor to hang the wastrel on Gallows Hill as soon as may be. 'Tis not fair dealing that the savages require, but harshness. They construe justice to be weakness in their heathen ignorance." He continued in like vein, so finally working off his anger. Then: "What think you of this, Neighbor Lindall?" he asked at length. "Will these skulking devils try to burn our houses about our heads or pick us off the while we toil in the fields?"

"Perchance no more will come of it," was the answer. "As I understand the sachem's meaning, he bids us release his son or else our lives will be forfeit. Having sent his message he must wait a time for our answer. An he wait long enough his petty quarrel will be as but a flea-bite in the greater trouble that will be upon us."

"You still look for a rising? Tush, tush, Master Lindall; I tell you this King Philip, as they call him, has not the courage. He but brags in his cups. Nay, nay, such annoyances as this we shall have to put up with until the country be cleaned of the vermin, but as for another such war as was fought with the Pequots, why, that cannot be. Well, I must be off. To-morrow you shall hear from me so soon as I return from Boston."

"I would I were as certain as he," murmured Nathan Lindall as the visitors departed.

Three days later, the Governor having dispatched one Sergeant Major Whipple to take command of the settlers, some sixteen of the latter met at Master Vernham's, well armed, and made diligent search for many miles about, finding numerous wandering Indians to whom no blame could be laid, but failing to apprehend or even discover trace of any hostile savages. So for the time ended the incident of the spotted arrows, and the memory of it dimmed, and while Nathan Lindall and William Vernham and their households were careful to go well armed about their duties, and a watch was kept throughout the nights, yet after a fortnight vigilance waned,

and even Obid was found by David fast asleep one night when he should have been awake and watchful. By this time June had come in hot and the corn was planted in the south field, and the kitchen garden was already showing the green sprouts of carrots and parsnips and turnips and other vegetables which grew, it seemed, fully as well as in England. Then, on a day when there was a lapse of work for him to do, David set forth for Natick to see Monapikot again, since, in spite of the Pegan's promise to come within the week, David had seen naught of him. By river the distance to the village of the Praying Indians was nearly twenty miles, so devious was the stream's winding course, whereas on foot it was but a matter of four or five. And yet David might well hesitate in the choice of routes, for by land the way led through the Long Marsh, which would have been more appropriately called bog, and save for what runways the deer had made therein there was no sort of trail. It was the thought of having to remain at the village overnight that finally decided David to take the land route, and he set out early one morning with musket across his shoulder and bread and meat in his pouch, and in his

ears his father's injunction to be watchful.

His way led him along the brook that flowed into the clearing, for it was by following that stream that he would unfailingly reach the first of the two large ponds lying between him and the Indian village. Now and then, after he had passed into the forest, he was able to walk briskly, but for the most part he had to make his own path, since for the last year or two the woods had not been fired thereabouts by the Indians and the underbrush had grown up rankly. Presently a small pond barred his way and he was some time finding the brook again. The most of two hours had gone before the first of the two large ponds lay before him. It was a full half-mile long and lay in a veritable quagmire over which David had to make his way with caution lest he step between the knolls or the uncertain hummocks of grass and sink to his middle, which had happened to him before. Many water birds swam upon the pond, and had he been minded to add game to his bag he might easily have done so. Mosquitoes attacked him ravenously, for the country was low-lying and no breeze dispelled the sultry stillness of the morning, and, when laden with a gun and balancing

one's self on a swaying tuft of grass, fighting the vicious insects was no graceful task! Alders and swamp willows barred his path and creeping vines sought to trip him, and it was not long before he was in a fine condition of perspiration — and exasperation as well.

At length a well-defined trail came to his rescue and led him around the end of the first pond and above the head of the second, although he had to ford a shallow, muddy stream on the way. More marsh followed and then the ground grew higher and pines and hemlocks and big-girthed oaks took the place of the switches. This second pond was a handsome expanse, lying blue and unruffled under the June sky with the reflection of white, fluffy clouds mirrored therein. As he neared the southern extremity of it, where it ended in a small cove, his eyes fell on a canoe formed of a hollowed pine trunk from which two squaws were fishing. The Indian women viewed him incuriously as he passed amongst the trees. They were, as he knew, dwellers in Master Eliot's village, now but a scant mile distant. Even as he watched, there was a splashing of the still surface beside the dugout and a fine bass leaped into

the sunlight. David paused and watched with a tingle of his pulse while the squaw who had hooked the fish cautiously drew him nearer the side of the canoe. The bass fought gamely, again and again flopping well out of the pond in the effort to shake free of the hook that held him, but his struggles were vain, and presently a short spear of sharpened wood was thrust from the canoe and a naked brown arm swept upward and the bass sparkled for an instant in the sunlight ere he disappeared in the bottom of the craft. No sign of pride or satisfaction disturbed the countenance of the Indian woman. She bent for a moment and then straightened and her newly baited hook again dropped quietly into the water.

"Had I brought such a monster to land," reflected David, "I should be now singing for joy!"

In the spring of 1675 the Natick Indian village was a well-ordered community. It lay upon both banks of the Charles River, with an arched footbridge laid upon strong stone piers between. Several wide streets were laid out upon which the dwellings faced and each family had its own allotted ground for garden and pasture. Save for the meet-

ing-house, a story-and-a-half erection of rough-hewn timbers enclosed in a palisaded fort, wooden buildings were scarce, since the Indians clung to their own style of dwelling. Some half-hundred wigwams composed the village, although not all were then occupied. There were many neat gardens, and fruit-trees abounded. Altogether the village looked prosperous and contented as David came toward it that June morning. The streets were given over chiefly to the children, it seemed, and these used them as playgrounds. At the door of a wigwam a squaw sat here and there at some labor, but industry was not a notable feature of the village. Save that a dog barked at him, David's arrival went unchallenged, and he crossed the long footbridge and sought the palisade where he thought to find Pikot at his duties of teaching the younger men and women. A lodge rather more pretentious than the rest was the residence of the sachem Waban, a Nipmuck who had lived previously at Nonantum and who had become the most prominent of Master Eliot's disciples and, it is thought, the most earnest. Waban had married a daughter of the famous Tahattawan, sachem of the country about the Concord River, him-

self a convert to Christianity and a teacher of it amongst his people. Besides being sachem, Waban likewise held the office of justice of the peace, and it was he who had a few years before written the laconic warrant for the arrest of an offender named Jeremiah Offscow: "To you big constable, quick you catch um, strong you hold um, safe you bring um afore me, Waban, justice peace." David knew the sachem well and meant to visit him before he left, but now he kept on to the meeting-house wherein the school was held on week-days and where the Reverend John Eliot discoursed to the Indians, and, usually, to a few English besides, on the Sabbath. The preacher lived when at the village in a small chamber divided off from the attic above.

David found Pikot busy with another teacher inside the building, and seated himself within the door to wait. Some fourteen or fifteen pupils, the younger members of the community, were at their lessons, and David had perforce to own that they indeed behaved with more decorum than a like number of English would have. Now and then a sly glance of curiosity came David's way from a pair of dark eyes, but for the most part his presence went unheeded. The In-

dians' voices sounded flat and expressionless as they answered the questions put to them or recited in unison a portion of the lesson. Indeed, David much questioned that they fully understood what they said save as a parrot might! After a while the class was dismissed and went sedately forth, boys and girls alike, and Pikot joined David and led him out of the building and through the palisade gate and so to the river where, on a flat stone above the stream, they sat themselves and began their talk.

"You came not for the fishing, Straight Arrow," charged David. "To an Indian who does not keep his word I have naught to say."

Pikot smiled. "True, Noawama, yet 'twas not of choice that I failed you. I went a long journey that took many days and I could not send you word."

"A long journey?" asked David eagerly. "Whither did you go?"

The Indian's expression became strangely blank as he waved his hand vaguely westward. "Toward the Great River, David."

"That they call the Connecticote? Tell me of your journey, Pikot. What did you go for?"

"The business was not mine, brother, and I may not talk."

"Oh, well, have your secrets then. And I'll have mine."

Monapikot smiled faintly. "And if I guess them?"

"I give you leave, O Brother of the Owl," jeered David.

The Indian half closed his eyes and peered at the tops of the tall pines that crowned the hill. "Came one by night through the forest," he said slowly in his native tongue. "The skin of a panther hung about him and he was armed only with a knife. As the weasel creeps through the grass, so this one crept to the lodge of the white man where all were asleep. On the stone without the door he laid a message from his sachem. As the fox slinks homeward when the sun arises, so this one slunk away. The forest took him and he vanished."

"How know you that?" asked David, affecting great surprise. "It but happened half a moon ago and none has heard of it save all the world! Can it be that you know also what the message was like?"

"An arrow wrapped with the cast skin of a rattlesnake, brother."

"Wonderful! And it may be that you can tell how the arrow was made, O Great Powwow."

"'Twas headed with an eagle's claw and tipped with gray feathers. Three blue marks were on it, O Noawama."

David frowned. "Now as to that I wonder," he said. "None saw the arrow save we three. How then could you know that the head was not of stone or the horn of the deer?"

"Did I not tell you I could guess your secret?"

"Aye, but methinks you are not guessing, Pikot. And how know you that the messenger came unarmed and wearing a panther-skin?"

"How know you that I speak true?" asked Pikot, smiling.

"I do not know," replied David ruefully, "but I would almost take oath to it. Saw you this Wachoosett, Pikot?"

Pikot shook his head. "Nay."

"Then how —"

"The Wachoosetts be fond of panther-skins, David, and the braves wear them much, as I know. As for the knife, an Indian

has no use for bow and arrow at night, nor, on a long journey, does he weight himself with a tomahawk. The eagle nests in the great hill in the Wachoosett country and Wachoosett people arm their arrows with the eagle's claws, and tip them with feathers from the eagle's wing. As for the blue spots, that I heard, brother."

"Oh!" But David viewed Pikot doubtfully. "I still think you knew more than you guessed. But 'tis no matter. This Metipom troubles us no more. Doubtless he waits to find whether his son be judged guilty or no. How far is this country of the Wachoosetts, Straight Arrow?"

"Maybe twelve leagues."

"No farther than that? 'Tis but a half-day journey for an Indian, then."

"Nay, for there be many streams and hills. One travels not as an eagle flies, brother."

"True, and still this Metipom lives too near for my liking. Think you he still means mischief, Pikot?"

"Aye," answered the Pegan gravely. "But it may be, as you say, that he will wait and see how his son fares in the court in Boston. You do ill to travel alone through the

forest, David, and when you return I will go with you."

"I shall be glad of your company, but I have no fear."

"Nor had the lion, and yet the wolves ate him." Pikot glanced at the sun and arose. "Come and eat meat with me, David, and then we will start the journey back, for I would have you safe before the shadows are long."

CHAPTER VI

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE POOL

The sun was still above the hills when Pikot bade farewell to David beyond the little pond that lay somewhat more than a mile from his home. The Indian would have gone farther, but David protested against it.

When David reached the house, he learned the news that had come that day from Boston by travelers who had stopped on their way to Dedham. Two days before Poggapanossoo, otherwise known as Tobias, and Mattashinnamy had been hanged at Plymouth. These were two of the three Indians who had been convicted of killing Sassamon the year before, and Tobias was one of King Philip's counselors. The third Indian under sentence had, it seemed, been reprieved, though the Dedham men did not know for what cause. David's father took a gloomy view of the affair.

"'Twere better had they let them lie in jail for a while longer," he said, "for their execution is likely to prove the last straw to Philip, who has long been seeking a nail

upon which to hang a quarrel. I fear the skies will soon be red again, David. I like it not."

"But these Indians were fairly tried, father, and surely they merited their punishment."

"Aye, lad, but there could have been no harm in delay."

"But if, as you have said, a strong hand should be shown? Will not King Philip, mayhap, take warning by the fate of these murderers?"

"Wisely said," piped Obid, busy at the hearth with the preparation of the evening meal. "An those of the Plymouth Colony, as well as we, were but to choose every other savage and hang him, 'twould put a quick end to these troubles. And I would that this Preacher Eliot were here to hearken."

"Time alone will tell," said Nathan Lindall soberly. "Yet the men from Dedham were not so minded. They foresee war with King Philip and dread that he will persuade the Narragansett Indians to join with him. 'When the leaves are on the trees,' said Tanopet."

"We here are far distant from Philip, though," said David.

"Little profit there will be in that," said Obid dourly, "with fivescore savages but five miles distant and the country full of wandering marauders! For my part, I tell you, 'twill be a relief to me when my scalp be well dangling from an Indian belt and I have no longer to worry about the matter."

"Waban, at Natick, is a firm friend of the English," replied David stoutly. "There is naught to fear from there. Nor do I believe that any Nipmuck will take arms against us. Indeed, an I am to see fighting, I must, methinks, move up the river to Dedham or join the Plymouth men."

"Do not jest, David," counseled his father. "It may be that you will find more fighting than will suit your stomach."

"Meanwhile," answered the boy gayly, "here is what suits my stomach very well. 'Twould be a monstrous pity to scalp you, Obid, so long as you can make such stew as this!"

A week went by, during which the corn sprouted finely, coaxed upward by gentle rains that came at night and vanished with the sun. There was plenty of work in field and garden and David had scant time for play. Yet he found opportunity to fish in

the river in the long evenings, paddling up to the falls and dropping his line in the deep, black pools there. He had brought some English hooks back with him from Boston and liked them well. No more news came from the outer world save that at Boston there was much uneasiness of an uprising of the Indians and drilling of the militia each day. If Philip meant mischief he bided his time.

The days grew very hot and the river dwindled in its bed. The brook through the clearing was no more than a trickle, for the spring had been unusually dry and the little showers no more than dampened the soil. One night David awoke in the darkness with the sound of great thunder in his ears and saw the window flash glaring white with the lightning. But the storm passed them by, rumbling off at last into the north, leaving the ground as parched as before. The kitchen garden must be watered by hand, and, lest the well go dry, David carried water in buckets from the small pool that lay in the swamp to the west, stumbling so frequently on his way back that the pails were seldom more than half-filled when he arrived. William Vernham came one day past the middle

of June and took dinner with them, being full of a project to build a road between Nathan Lindall's house and his own over which one might travel by horseback. David's father, however, was faint-hearted in the matter, since the distance was all of three miles and much swampy ground intervened. Besides which, as David, listening to the talk, thought, but did not say, Master Lindall owned no horse. In the end the visitor went away again somewhat disgruntled.

So passed the first of the summer very peacefully until July had come in. Then one day messengers came up the river from Newtowne with the news so long dreaded. King Philip had at last thrown down the gauntlet. The day before an express had reached Boston from the Plymouth Colony bearing a letter from Governor Winslow announcing that an attack had occurred on the settlement at Swansea and that several of the English had been killed. Philip, it was said, had already armed more than a thousand of his people and from now on it was war to the knife. Messengers were on their way to the Narragansetts to persuade them not to join forces with Philip and Governor Leverett had offered Governor Winslow aid of

arms and ammunition. Meanwhile the train-bands were preparing in case of need.

To David the tidings were not wholly amiss, for the prospect of bearing arms and fighting against King Philip's Indians was enough to make any boy's heart beat faster. Nathan Lindall seemed in better spirits for the news and even Obid was more cheerful now that the die was cast. That night they sat long about the fire and cleaned the guns with oil and fine ashes and discussed the matter well. It was southward that the first trouble would come, they agreed, and so Nathan Lindall laid plans to remove his cattle to Natick so soon as necessity was shown and join the men of Dedham. Sleep did not come readily to David that night, and Obid's snores long made an accompaniment to the visions of marches and bloody battles that visited him in the darkness. And yet when the new day came life was disappointingly much as before. There was corn to hoe and weeds to be pulled and the sun was hotter than ever and martial glory seemed as far away as ever.

But the frontier was stirring and men came and went by land and river, and seldom a day passed that red man or white did

not pause at the plantation to exchange news and opinions. Of these was Joe Tanopet, resplendent in a ruffled shirt of which he seemed very proud, and which, David suspected, would come to pieces were the Indian to try to remove it. In spite of the heat Tanopet wore his green waistcoat, for association with the English had convinced him that discomfort and respectability were inseparable. He had no news of importance, or professed to have none, and said that he had spent the month fishing in the Long Pond beyond Natick. As proof of the assertion he brought eight fat bass, which Obid subsequently threw to the hogs, since, as he said, they had been overlong from their native element.

Word came from Boston that Daniel Henchman, the schoolmaster, had been chosen by the Council to be Captain of Infantry and that able soldiers to the number of one hundred were shortly to march under him toward the south; and also that a company of horse was forming under Captain Prentice. Nathan Lindall went up to Dedham one morning and returned late that night with the tidings that the troops had left Boston the day before, and that with them had

gone Samuel Mosely and more than a hundred volunteers gathered together in Boston in, it was said, less than three hours' time.

"Had I been in Boston I would have joined, too," said David regretfully.

"This Mosely is he who was wont to be a pirate at Jamaica, I take it," said Obid. "I doubt a fitter man could be found to deal with the savages, master."

"Nay, a privateer he was, Obid, with the King's commission."

"I see but little difference," Obid grumbled. "Nor matters it so long as he employs a pirate's methods against the heathen."

News came slowly, but about the first of the month they learned that Swansea had been burned to the ground by the Indians and that the English troops had made rendezvous there and had moved against the hostiles who were in force near by. David pleaded with his father to be allowed to go to Dedham and join a band then being recruited, but was denied. Stories of unrest among the Nipmucks trickled in, and from Boston came the report that the Indians of the several Praying Villages were under suspicion and that a plan that had been advanced to recruit them into the English forces was

loudly declaimed against. William Vernham came over with the first authentic account of the Swansea attack, which, it seemed, had begun with the plundering of one or two houses by a force of six or eight of Philip's men from Mount Hope. Aid was summoned from Plymouth and an attack by the Indians in force was prevented by the assembling of some forty of the English at the Swansea bridge. The Indians retreated again to Mount Hope, but subsequently preyed on the settlement in small bands, killing eight persons and cutting off their feet and hands as well as scalping them. They also fired at least one house. The inhabitants were forced to abandon the town, removing themselves and their household goods and live-stock to Rehoboth and there fortifying themselves in three dwellings. The Indians then burned Swansea to the ground.

"Both the Narragansetts and Nipmucks have joined with King Philip," added Master Vernham, "though both had promised to take no sides in the matter. 'Twill not be long, I doubt, ere the war-cries ring in our ears even here, for, an I mistake not, Philip has laid his plans well and ere the summer be

gone we shall see all the tribes hereabouts arrayed against us. I would there were the means at hand to construct a stockade fort, but 'tis a task too great for a few hands. We shall have to retire either to Newtowne or Dedham, Master Lindall."

"I shall remove what I may to Natick," replied Nathan Lindall, "and join the militia so soon as 'tis seen that the Indians mean to carry the war into this country. There be three of us here, Master Vernham, who can shoot fairly straight and, though men of peace, are ready to avenge those so foully murdered at Swansea."

"Were it not for Mistress Vernham I would bid you say four," said the other gloomily. "Nay, even so, an the varmints come hither, I will join you."

When the visitor had gone again, David set about the watering of the garden, for the rain still held away and the crops were drooping sadly. There were those who connected the unnatural drouth with the eclipse of the moon that had happened a week or so before and who predicted all kinds of dire things in consequence. The small pond in the marsh still held a little muddy water, although it was fast drying up, and to reach

it David had built a sort of pier of stones over the mire. To-day he had filled one bucket and carried it to the bank and was filling the second when a slight sound in the alders to the left caused him to glance swiftly. That something had moved there he was certain, and it seemed that his eyes had glimpsed it, and yet it was gone before he could be sure of the latter. He had an impression of something brown or leather-hued between the trees which might well have been an old fox. He listened intently and searched the thicket with his gaze, but no other sound reached him, and presently he lifted the bucket and picked his way across the stones to the firm ground. There the sensation of being watched came to him strongly, so that the skin at the back of his neck prickled, and he wheeled quickly and again scanned the swamp. A bird fluttering amongst the alders caused his heart to jump and he laughed at himself and took up his buckets.

"'Tis this talk of Indians," he muttered as he made his way along the path he had worn to the clearing. "I am as fluttery as a hen!"

He was a scant three paces from the edge of the thicket when the noise of a snapping

twig brought him up short. Ten yards away to the right a half-naked Indian stepped toward him. As David turned, the savage's hand went up in friendly gesture.

"Noicantop?" he called, the Nipmuck equivalent for "How do you?"

"Dock tau he?" ("Who are you?") returned David sternly.

"Netop." ("A friend.")

"Speak English, friend. What you want?"

"Me got um message speak you David man." The Indian made his way toward David unhurriedly. He was a tall, slim youth of twenty-two or -three, naked to the waist, unarmed save for a hunting-knife at his belt. His scalp-lock was confined in a metal tube some three inches in length above which it was gathered in a black knot and adorned with several long feathers of yellow and red. Three strings of black-and-white wampum were about his neck and his girdle was elaborately worked with colored porcupine quills. That he was not one of the Natick tribe was evident, for they no longer painted their bodies whereas this youth showed many smears of yellow, red, and brown on

IN THAT INSTANT DAVID KNEW, AND HIS HEART LEAPED INTO HIS THROAT

face and chest. Doubtful, David raised a hand.

"Wait!" he said. "Who sends this message?"

The Indian paused and his gaze, leaving David, shot for an instant past the boy's head. In that instant David knew, and his heart leaped into his throat. He loosed his hands and the buckets fell to the ground, but ere he could turn, the foe was upon him. Strong arms twined about him and he was borne backward in a welter of snapping branches and came to earth with the breath jarred from his body.

CHAPTER VII

CAPTURED

THERE had been no time to cry out, so quickly had he been overcome, and now the opportunity was past. A twisted cloth was thrust into his mouth and tied behind his head ere he could bring his astonished muscles to obey him. Then, although he heaved and fought, his efforts were vain. Three snarling, painted faces bent over him, a knife poised itself above his heart, and in a trice his arms were pinioned securely. Surprise had given place to wrath, and David panted and mouthed and kicked, glaring back at his captors madly. He was angry with himself as well as with them, mortified to think that he should have so easily fallen into their trap. Tears threatened his eyes and he had difficulty keeping them back. When they had him secure, leaving, however, his feet free, they lifted him up, and the one who had greeted him from the thicket spoke.

"You come, we no hurt. You no come, we kill." He pressed the point of his knife

gently against David's throat. If he thought to see the lad flinch, he was mistaken. David moved no muscle. Only his eyes shot venom into the face of the savage. The Indian grunted and stepped back. "Good," he said. "You come, no make kill." One of the others had gone back into the swamp and now returned with a musket, two bows, and two quivers of gray-tipped arrows. The arrows settled for David the identity of his captors. They were, he reasoned, Wachoosett Indians, emissaries of the sachem Woosonametipom. What they meant to do with him he could not yet fathom. Handing the musket to the English-speaking Indian, the one who had fetched it turned his attention to the buckets and the three discussed them for a moment. David made out only an occasional word, for, while the language they used was undoubtedly Nipmuck, their guttural speech was different from the clear articulation and careful phrasing of Monapikot. Finally it was decided to take one of the buckets and leave the other, and the one who had proposed it, who seemed the oldest of the three, secured it with a rawhide thong to his girdle. As the bucket was made of oak with iron hoops and bail, it was no light

burden. But its gratified possessor seemed not to mind its weight and even looked back regretfully at its companion left behind.

It was he who led the way. David went next, and at the rear came the Indian with the musket. For more than a mile they kept to the swamp land and woods, following first the dried bed of a runnel and later the foot of a long hill whose wooded summit stood dark against the yellow of the western sky. No word was spoken and scarcely a twig was snapped or a branch flicked by the savages. Had David's plight been less unhappy, he might have enjoyed seeing with what ease and in what stealthy silence the leader made his cautious way through the underbrush. Branches parted and swept together again without a sound, and even the bucket swinging at his hip never once caught. The pace was not fast, but it never faltered, and to David, who had not the use of his arms to aid him, it was more rapid than he would have chosen. Once, catching a foot in a vine, he fell headlong, with much noise, unable to save himself, and was jerked rudely to his feet again by the Indian behind him, who growled at him in Nipmuck words he did not understand, but whose tenor was clear

enough. Twilight settled and the forest became full of shadows. By this time, however, they had left the lowlands and were proceeding generally northwestward through open woods. David's captors did not appear to be apprehensive of meeting any one, although it was evident that they wanted to get their prey well out of that part of the country before pursuit might be started. So far as the boy knew there lay no settlement for many miles in the direction they were taking, since the little village at Sudbury lay well to the west and the Concord settlement more to the east. For that matter, he reflected hopelessly, they might easily pass within a stone-throw of either place in the darkness without danger of being seen.

When an hour or more had passed, the woods ended and, in the starlit darkness, a broad meadow stretched for miles. Here and there lay the glimmer of water, and David knew that they had come to the edge of the Sudbury Marshes through which wound the Crooked River. A halt was called, and David's gag was removed that he might eat the cracked raw corn that they fed him. At first his jaws were too stiff to move and his lips and tongue were numb, but presently he was

able to chew the food and swallow it. No fire was lighted, and, when they had rested for a half-hour, they went on again. By thrusting his jaw out, David succeeded in having the gag replaced more loosely, although it still effectually prevented him from making any outcry. Across the meadow they went to the river, and there without hesitation they descended into the water and, since the stream was low, forded without being wet above their middles. Again they found woodland, and unerringly the elder of the three entered it and went on at his unfaltering pace. David kept close at his heels. The short halt had rested him, but walking with the hands tied behind one is difficult, and soon he began to lag. That was the signal for an ungentle prod from the Indian behind him and David increased his pace again. All sorts of plans for escape came to him only to be dismissed as impractical. Had he had the use of his hands, he might have attempted stepping aside and trusting to elude his captors in the blackness of the forest, but to try that under the conditions was useless. He would have blundered into trees and doubtless fallen before he had gone a dozen steps.

From the evenness of the path they trod

he judged that they were on one of the main Indian trails leading from the coast inland. These were well-trod paths over which one might easily ride on horseback, as the settlers had discovered. But they were far from level as often leading over a hill as around it, and the boy's body was presently sore and his lungs hot and dry. He thought they must have covered a good twelve miles, and was convinced that he could go but a little way farther. The proddings at his back came frequently now, and he was bidden "quog quosh!" or "more fast!" But even threats failed at last and David stumbled and sank to the ground and closed his eyes deliciously. Again they raised him, the one in command striking him harshly with the butt of his musket. David felt the blow, but was dead to the pain of it and toppled again to earth the instant they released him.

"You no sleep! You make hurry more fast. No can lie down. You walk-walk or me kill!"

"Matta," muttered David. "Naut seam." ("No, very tired.")

"You want kill?" demanded the Indian angrily. "You want be dead, stay here all-time?"

David heard, but was too sleepy to answer. Something sharp pierced his doublet, under a shoulder, and he groaned. Again he was pulled to his feet and again they refused to bear him. After that he was only dimly aware of what went on, for his eyes would not stay open and sleep was ever just behind them. He heard his captors talking, although their voices seemed to come from a great distance. Then the voices dwindled and silence fell. David slept.

An hour later they waked him and pulled him to his feet. Still dazed with sleep, he remonstrated fretfully, and would not stand until again that sharp sting of a knife-point made him wince and come back to reality.

The Indian who spoke English was talking to him. "You plenty sleep, David man. You walk-walk. You no walk-walk we stick um knife very good!"

"Aye, I'll walk. I'm rested now. What name you?"

"Sequanawah," replied the Indian after a moment's hesitation.

"You Wachoosett man?"

"You no talk. You make hurry," was the gruff answer. "Quog quosh."

On they went through the dark forest, now

and then climbing across some bare hill-top where the starlight showed David the form of the Indian ahead and from where he could vaguely sense the wooded valleys below them. The cooler air of early morning blew in their faces at such times, bringing a shiver even as it refreshed. For some reason, probably because there was no longer any necessity, they had not replaced the gag in the boy's mouth, and he was able to breathe freely and even to talk, although talking was quickly discouraged. Just before dawn another halt was made and the Indians again produced corn from their pouches and gave David a handful of it to munch. Only once had he had water, and now he was thirsty again and said so.

Sequanawah grunted. "You come," he said.

David followed to where, some forty yards away from their resting-place, the Indian stooped in the half-darkness and scraped at the leaves under a giant birch. Then he leaned his head down to the basin he had formed and David heard him drink. When the boy had also had his fill of the cool but brackish water, he followed the Indian back, and on the way he asked wonderingly:

"How you know water there, Sequanawah?"

"Me smell um," was the grave reply.

As David couldn't see the Indian's face, he was unable to say whether the latter was in earnest or not, and the matter ever remained a mystery to him. Sitting again, Sequanawah emptied a tiny bit of powder onto a flat stone, laid a few wisps of birch bark above it, and set fire with the flint of his musket. Then a half-dozen twigs were placed on the little blaze and the Indians carefully filled their pipes with tobacco and lighted them. After that there was no word uttered until the weed was smoked.

Then Sequanawah grunted: "Hub!" and the others arose.

"How much more walk?" asked David.

Sequanawah looked around at the clustering trees and up at the sky that now showed gray above them. "Pausochu," he answered. ("A little way.")

What was to happen to him when the journey was ended, David did not know, but he was weary through and through and almost any fate seemed preferable to further toiling up and down hills. He no longer doubted that his destination was the village of the

Wachoosett Indians near the Lone Hill, which, he had gathered from Monapikot, was a very tall mountain standing quite by itself far from any English settlement. Whether Woosonametipom meant to kill him or put him to torture or merely hold him prisoner, time alone could reveal.

After another hour's progress, they emerged from the forest in a meadow that lay about a fair-sized pond. The dawn was close at hand and near-by objects were plainly discernible. Sequanawah pointed a naked arm, and David, following with his gaze, made out dimly in the grayness a great hill that loomed before them less than a mile distant.

"Great Sachem Woosonametipom him live," said the Indian. "Quog quosh!"

So forward they went, skirting the pond wherein the frogs were already talking to each other in deep voices, and came presently to more woods. The ground began to rise and somewhere ahead a dog barked. Others answered. They were on a well-trodden trail that wound upward through oaks and maples and tall, slim pines. Suddenly a clearing was before them, a wide plateau near the foot of the mountain. Many

wigwams showed their tops above a rude palisade of logs and the smoke of early fires filled the air. The barking of dogs made a great din, and, as David's captors paused at the edge of the woods, a door in the fort opened and several Indians, men and women, came through, and with them a dozen snarling, barking mongrels, and Sequanawah called something above the clamor and they went forward again toward the doorway.

CHAPTER VIII

METIPOM QUESTIONS

The wigwam was so large that forty men might have sat within it, but when David, thrust through the opening by Sequanawah, entered, it was comparatively empty. A man, a woman, three young children, and a few dogs squatted or lay about the fire in the center. The man was smoking a long pipe, the squaw was preparing breakfast. The smoke from the small fire mingled with that of the sachem's pipe and filled the dwelling with acrid fumes that made the boy's eyes blink and smart. The dogs arose, growling, and crept forward to sniff at his heels, while the sachem only nodded without taking his pipe from his mouth and the squaw looked up stolidly from her task. Sequanawah spoke and the sachem answered a dozen words. Sequanawah stepped to the doorway and called. The call was taken up without. Silence fell in the wigwam save for the sizzling of the none too dry fagots and the suspicious whining of the dogs, which, finding nothing

to tempt them in the heavy leather of the captive's shoes, retreated to the fire. The children, the youngest scarcely more than a papoose, gazed with steady, curious, dark eyes. Only the largest, who might have been six years of age, boasted clothing of any sort, and his costume was no more than a cloth about his middle. He was already well bronzed of skin, but the youngest child was still nearly as white as when born.

While he stood there awaiting what Fate should award him, David viewed the sachem of the Wachoosetts with interest. The chief was an older man than he had thought; perhaps well-nigh sixty; and his hair was streaked with gray. But he was still straight of back and firm of body, and the years seemed to have dealt lightly with him. He was a large man, broad of shoulder and deep of chest, and his muscles looked strong and hard. In countenance he was well-favored for one of his tribe, for the Nipmucks, unlike some of the more northerly tribes, were generally unprepossessing of form and feature. Woosonametipom had a long head and sharp cheek-bones, the latter more prominent because of the thinness of the face, and the lines and wrinkles were many and deep.

The eyes were bright, however, and, although the sachem's countenance expressed harshness and cruelty, David found nothing therein suggesting meanness. He wore clothing befitting his rank: a cloak of panther-skin that shone lustrously in the light that came down through the smoke-hole, leggings of soft deer-hide much ornamented with quills and beads, several strings and anklets of wampum. His head was shaven to the scalp-lock, and that was bound with bits of red cloth until it stood upright a good eight inches, and was lavishly strung with bright feathers. Several rings encircled the fingers of the left hand, and on his naked chest where the panther-skin fell away a great round disk of silver rudely chased with some design rose with each slow inhalation of smoke and fell again as the evil-smelling fumes poured forth from mouth or nose. After a first gravely appraising look, the sachem had not again observed David. His eyes remained on the kettle, now noisily bubbling, quite as though life held nothing more in prospect than the morning meal.

The sachem's squaw was a quite young woman, but to David's mind horribly fat and ugly, with crossed-eyes and a flattish nose.

She was dressed with no pretension to rank and wore few ornaments. Although as wife of the sagamore she held the position of queen, she was in effect little more than a household drudge. Presently, squatting beside the fire, she thrust a wooden spoon into the pot, withdrew it, and held it to her lips. Then she passed it to the sachem. He, too, tasted, but shook his head silently. Children and dogs watched the performance with intentness. When another minute had passed, the entrance was darkened and a small, wiry Indian, naked save for breech-cloth and a multitude of ornaments that depended from neck and arms, knees and ankles, entered followed by three others. The sachem grunted a word or two and David was thrust forward until he stood but a yard or two from him. The newcomer, evidently a powwow, or medicine man, stood at his right and Sequanawah at his other side. Again the sachem spoke and the powwow translated in excellent English.

"Great Sachem asks what name, brother."

"David Lindall."

"How come here?"

David stared from sachem to interpreter. "You ought to know that," he answered

bitterly. "This Indian caught and bound me and brought me here."

The sachem thereupon directed his words to Sequanawah, and the latter made an explanation, a word or two of which David was able to understand.

Presently the powwow said blandly: "Sequanawah say you come to village where he watch and ask food. He bring you to Great Sachem. Why you lie?"

"I tell no lie," answered David wonderingly. "I not understand. He capture me yesterday near my home, many leagues away. He had two others with him. They put cloth between my teeth so that I could not cry out and bound my hands behind my back. All night we travel. What story is this he tells?"

"Great Sachem say hold out hands."

David obeyed.

"They not bound," said the powwow.

"He released them ere I entered here."

"Great Sachem say he not believe your story. Great Sachem good friend of English. All his people friends of English people. No would steal you. Great Sachem say maybe you sick in head. You think?"

David looked in puzzlement at the sachem

and their eyes met. The chief's face was all innocence and candor, but at the back of the dark eyes, like sparks in a dead fire, were glints of guile, and David understood.

"I know only what I have told," he answered the powwow. "If I have dreamed, so be it. Give me food, for I am faint, and I will return to my home."

"Great Sachem say yes. Say all English men his brothers. Say when they not deal honestly with him, they still his brothers. Maybe you know English take his son Nausauwah and put him in prison."

David nodded. "He was suspected of setting fire to an Englishman's barn. He is to be fairly tried by the court in Boston."

"Great Sachem say Englishman's law not Indian's law. Say how can he know Nausauwah get justice."

"Tell him that the English always deal justly," replied David stoutly. "Ask him when they have done otherwise."

"Great Sachem say English take much lands from Indian and build fences about and Indians no can go in for hunt."

"The English always pay for the lands. When they are planted, they are no longer for hunting."

"Great Sachem say maybe English kill Nausauwah. Maybe make him slave far across sea. Great Sachem love his son and no want it so. Maybe your father have same love to you. Not want you hurt or killed. You think?"

"Aye," answered the boy steadily.

"Great Sachem think so too. Maybe English send his son back to him pretty soon. You think?"

"I do not know, but if he is not guilty, he will go free. But first he will be tried."

"When you think he be tried?"

"Soon. Ere this, doubtless, had not the trouble in the Plymouth Colony disturbed those in Boston."

"Great Sachem say what trouble at Plymouth."

"King Philip, as we call him, has taken wicked counsel and has killed many of the English and burned their homes." If David expected evidences of surprise, he was disappointed. The sachem received the news placidly, as did the others, and David concluded that they had already known it. "The English have sent many soldiers to punish King Philip," he added sternly, "and he will be very sorrowful indeed."

"Great Sachem say Pometacom very wicked," announced the powwow smoothly. "Say he must get plenty punishment like bad child. Say Wachoosett people very angry with Pometacom."

"Aye. Say to the Great Sachem that all Indians except Philip's tribe have declared friendship for the English and that many will fight for them if need be."

"Great Sachem say he glad to know. Say Wachoosett Indians very peaceful. No make war with English. No make war with Pometacom. Wachoosett people everybody's brother. No make meddle any time."

"That is well," said David. "And now, brother, give me food and I will go back by the trail I came."

"Great Sachem say you rest first. No hurry you go away. He say you have plenty food, plenty sleep. He say you his brother, his heart warm to you. He say you stay here little time and make talk with him. Then he give you Indians show you trail and keep you safe from Pometacom."

"When will that be?" asked David, his heart sinking.

"Little time. Great Sachem give you lodge, give you food, give you all to make

happy. Give you plenty servant. You like maybe so? "

"Tell the great Sachem that I thank him for his kindness, but that I must return to my home, for my father does not know where I am and will be sorrowful."

"Great Sachem say his heart weep for your father. Say he send message to him so he not trouble for you. Say you stay here and be brother for little time he much like."

"Talk plainly!" cried David, patience at an end. "You mean to keep me prisoner. So be it! But say to your sachem that whether I go or stay will make no difference to his son, for he will be held until tried and if guilty will be punished. And say to him that my people will seek me, and will know where to seek, as well, and when I am found it will go hard with him, indeed!"

"Great Sachem say you talk without thought," answered the powwow gently. "You his brother. He no make prisoner his brother. English may so, but he not. You have long journey. Forest hide many enemies. You stay here and have plenty rest. Then you go home all safe. Great Sachem very kind heart for English brother."

"I am in your hands," replied David bit-

terly. "I have no choice, 'twould seem, but accept your hospitality, O Maker of Magic. So I pray you bring me to a place where I may rest."

Sequanawah laid a hand on his sleeve. "You come," he said.

As David turned away, he caught again the mocking gleam that lay at the back of the sachem's placid gaze.

The village was fully awake now, and men old and young sat by the doors of the wigwams or moved among them, and women were at their tasks in the first rays of sunlight that came around the green-clad shoulder of the mountain. Dogs snarled and fought underfoot over the bones thrown to them from the dwellings. Young boys ran and shouted or sat in circles at their games. David's passing elicited only the faintest interest amongst the older Indians, but the young boys and children, most of whom had doubtless never before set eyes on a white-face, regarded him with unconcealed curiosity. Many left their play and followed to the far side of the stockade where a wigwam stood slightly removed from the rest. Into this Sequanawah conducted the prisoner. A very old woman crouched above a fire on

which some fish cooked in a stone basin. She glanced up briefly and then dropped her watery eyes again to her task.

"You live here," said Sequanawah. "Nice place. Old woman she make food. Young Indian soon come be servant. You want, you say." He dropped his voice. "Inside wall you all right. Outside no can go. Great Sachem say, 'Catch um outside, kill um quick.' Farewell."

"Farewell," replied David.

When the Indian had gone, he threw himself wearily on the rough hide that formed the nearest approach to a bed that his new dwelling afforded and moodily watched the ancient crone scatter the fire and then place the smoking basin of fish at his side. He nodded his thanks, and then, as the squaw seemed not inclined to leave him, but would have settled herself across the wigwam, he made signs toward the entrance, and, since she was either too weak of sight or stupid of mind to comprehend, he said, "Mauncheak, mauncheak!" which signifies "Go away." That she heard and understood, and pulled her old body from the ground with a groan and toddled out. He ate a little of the fish, which was none so bad save that it

lacked the seasoning he was used to — for the Indians used no salt in their cooking — and then lay back and, with his hands beneath his head, stared upward at the sun-patterned roof of this strange house and gave himself over to thought. From without came the low hum of voices, the snarling and barking of dogs, the thud of a stone axe on timber, and at times the shrill shouting of the boys at play. The sounds were all foreign and unaccustomed and David's heart sank as a fuller realization of his predicament came to him.

CHAPTER IX

THE VILLAGE OF THE WACHOOSETTS

It was clear to him that, so long as the sachem's son was neither harmed nor deported into slavery, his own safety was assured, but if the court in Boston presently put Nausauwah to trial and ordered him executed, which was not beyond the possibilities, or sent to the Indies, his life would not be worth a grain of corn. Therefore, thought the boy, it behooved him somehow to manage an escape before Nausauwah's fate was decided. Fortunately, he believed, the troubles with King Philip might well delay the sitting of the court beyond its usual time.

Woosonametipom had made him hostage to ensure the safety of his son, but, lest he bring the English about his ears, was prepared to deny the fact: for which purpose he had invented the story that David had wandered to the Indian village and asked for food and shelter. Should David's friends come there seeking him, which they would do of a surety, Metipom would either hide him and deny all knowledge of him or turn

him over to the rescuers with the assertion that he had sought the Wachoosetts' hospitality and had been cared for by them as a guest. Possibly they would say that he was ill or out of his mind and that they had healed him. It was not a likely story, nor would it be believed in the face of the boy's denials, but it might serve its purpose of calming the Englishmen's wrath. Moreover, without a doubt every inhabitant of the village would gravely testify to the truth of it. As David knew, the Indians were poor liars, trusting far less to plausibility than to dogged persistence. The story might well answer Metipom's purpose and "save his face."

But David did not believe that the sachem would give him up on demand, for in such case he would have gained nothing and would have antagonized the English. It was far more likely that he would deny any knowledge of him and yet subtly contrive to let the seekers understand that, when Nausauwah was returned safely to his tribe, David Lindall would reappear. No matter how strong their suspicions might be, David's friends would hesitate to wreak vengeance without some proof. Doubtless Metipom would invite them to search the village and

question his men, which, with David well hidden in the forest and the inhabitants told what answers to give, would lead to nothing. Thus he reasoned, knowing much of Indian ways and character both from personal experience and hearsay, and reasoned well as events proved.

In the end it appeared clear to him that if he was to escape from his captors, it must be by efforts of his own; that help from outside was not to be depended on. It might be that the authorities in Boston would decide to release Nausauwah in exchange for David. Doubtless Master Vernham, who was not without influence in the town, would use his good offices. And there was Uncle William, as well: and perhaps others. And yet David knew how firm those Puritans stood for Law and Justice, and it might well be that their consciences would sternly refuse such a compromise. Such a solution of his difficulties was, he concluded, more than uncertain.

Remained, therefore, first of all, to study well his prison and acquaint himself with the manner in which it was guarded, for which purpose it would be well to seem reconciled to his fate, maintaining a cheerful

countenance and making friends as he might. By such means he might allay suspicion and gain added liberty. And having reached this sensible decision, David closed his eyes and went to sleep.

When he awoke the sun was past the meridian and the shadows had begun to lengthen. The wigwam was hot and breathless and he was parched with thirst. At the entrance he almost stepped on a young Indian half asleep there, his naked body, heavily smeared with oil, glistening in the hot sunlight. He was a comely, well-proportioned youth, in age perhaps twenty, with a rather livelier expression than common to his people.

He grunted as David's foot encountered him and looked up inquiringly. "What um want?" he asked.

"Water," David answered. The Indian seemed not to know the word and so David said, "Nippe," although not certain that it would be more successful, since the Nipmuck equivalent of "water" varied in different localities, as did many other words. But the youth understood and sprang to his moccasined feet.

"You come," he said, and led the way

past many wigwams to where a spring issued forth from beneath a granite ledge. A rude box of small logs, barked and chinked with clay, had been laid about the mouth of the spring so that the water was held ere it trickled away in a little runnel across the gently sloping ground. As there was no vessel to drink from, David knelt and dipped his mouth to the pool and drank deeply, though the water was lukewarm from standing in the sun. When he had finished, feeling vastly refreshed, the Indian took his place. But instead of following David's method, he scooped the water up in his right hand and bore it to his lips, and did it so quickly and deftly that scarcely a drop was wasted. Whereupon David attempted the same trick and failed, the water running down over his wrist ere he could get his mouth to his palm. There was a grunt from the Indian and David saw that the latter was greatly amused.

"You show how," laughed David.

The Indian youth smiled broadly and obeyed, and after several attempts David at length succeeded in mastering the trick fairly well, and his instructor applauded with many nods and said, "Good! Good!"

David moved away and, observing that the Indian did not accompany him, said, "You come." The young brave bowed and fell in behind. "What name you?" David asked.

"John."

"John? Have you no Indian name?" The other seemed not to understand the question, and later David found that his attendant's knowledge of English was very limited. "You got more name?" he asked.

"Me John," repeated the Indian.

"John — what?"

The other shook his head and David gave up.

The village was quiet, even the dogs being for the most part fast asleep in the shade of the wigwams. Here and there a squaw or a maiden sat at the entrance of a lodge preparing food or working with cloth or buckskin. Few men were in sight, for the Indians chose to sleep in the heat of the day, or, failing sleep, to lie still within the wigwams and smoke their pipes. As he made a circuit of the village, David observed well. He judged that the ground within the palisade might well be an acre and a half in extent. It did not form any approach to a true circle, but adjusted itself to the shape

of the sloping plateau. Before it, as David recalled, lay a hillside of grass and thicket and then the forest. Back of it, as he could see, the side of the mountain sloped more steeply, strewn with ledges and rocks, but the forest did not begin again for some distance, perhaps an eighth of a mile. It seemed to him that, while the fort might be well enough disposed against attack by savages, an enemy armed with muskets could do no little damage from the edge of the forest above, although the distance was too great to permit of accurate shooting. The palisade was high and strong, the top of each log being sharply pointed. A few peep-holes, no larger than one might speed an arrow or thrust a spear through, had been left at certain places in the English fashion. Two platforms of saplings lashed together with strips of hide or twisted roots offered posts of observation above the wall. The gate or door was narrow and was closed by a roughly-hewn barricade of oak planks so heavy that David doubted the ability of fewer than three men to move it into place.

The sachem's wigwam stood by itself near the center of the enclosure and was larger than any other and more elaborately adorned

with pictures and hieroglyphics in red and brown and black pigments. Before the door two poles were set in the ground from each of which depended objects that aroused the boy's curiosity. Nearing them, he saw that the right-hand pole held a dead owl suspended by a cord from one foot and that the other was decorated with a bunch of rushes tied about with a strip of blue cotton cloth through which was thrust a long white feather.

He turned to John and pointed. "What for?" he asked.

"Medicine," was the reply.

What virtue lay in either a dead owl or a bunch of marsh rushes, David was at a loss to know, but Indian "medicine" as interpreted by the powwows was a thing beyond understanding.

There seemed to be about fifty wigwams within the fort, and later David estimated the inhabitants to be approximately two hundred in number, of which fully half were women and children below the fighting age. As Indian villages went, this one of the Wachoosetts' was well-ordered and fairly clean. There was apparently no system in the disposition of the lodges, every one

building where it pleased him. So far as guarding against attack went, David could not see that any precaution was being taken. But in this he was wrong, as he afterwards discovered.

It took but a short time to make a circuit of the village during which he saw few inhabitants and occasioned no apparent interest in any. Returning to his own abode for want of a better place, he found a shaded space on one side and seated himself, motioning John to do likewise. During his trip of inspection he had held little conversation with the Indian, for it is difficult to talk comfortably with a companion who insists on walking squarely behind you, and all David's scheming had failed to induce John to walk elsewhere than behind. Now, however, David began the self-imposed task of improving himself in the Nipmuck language.

Pointing to his hand, he asked: "What name?"

"Nitchicke," replied John.

Then David pointed to his arm.

"Napet." The Indian understood the game now and became interested, and presently he was in turn asking, "What name?"

His efforts to pronounce the English words

were doubtless no more amusing than David's attempts at the Indian, but David thought them so! John took no offense at the other's laughter, but sometimes smiled widely himself when his tongue refused to conform to the demands of an L or an R. David did not continue too long at the lesson, preferring to memorize a few words thoroughly rather than to half-learn a great many. But the sun had lengthened its shadows much and the intense heat of the early afternoon was gone by the time he dismissed his school. John disappeared amidst the wigwams across the enclosure, and David, setting in mental array the few facts he had gleaned from his journey of the fort, set his mind to fashioning a means of escape. But he did not look for success at the first attempt, nor did he win it. The problem was not one to be lightly solved, if at all, and in any event he must first determine how closely he was guarded at night.

The village became awake again as the afternoon drew to its end. Hunters departed through the gate, women and children went to seek berries and fruits, dogs aroused themselves and prowled for food, large boys squatted in circles and played their strange

games, younger ones romped boisterously, dodging in and out from the lodges with mocking cries. Sometimes a papoose whimpered hungrily, but for the most part the little creamy-skinned, big-eyed babies were as silent as though Nature had denied them tongues. Smoke began to appear above the tops of the wigwams, ascending straight in air like blue pencils of vapor. More often, though, the evening fires were built in front of the wigwam doors. Women, young and old, busied themselves with the stone or metal pots in which nearly everything was cooked. At the nearer wigwam an older squaw was cutting a piece of blood-dripping flesh into thin strips, chanting a song softly as she worked. Her fire was no more than a few small fagots enclosed between two flat stones that supported the iron kettle. The strips of meat were dropped into the kettle as cut and to David they looked far from appetizing. He presumed that there was water in the pot, and after a while, as he watched idly, a faint steam arose from it and proved him right. The squaw went into the wigwam and presently returned holding something that looked like gray meal in her cupped hands. This she dropped slowly into

the kettle, afterwards stirring it with her wooden spoon. That done, she brought forth two stones, one flat with a hollowed space in one surface and the other somewhat pear-shaped and smaller. Into the hollow of the larger stone she dropped a few kernels of corn, taken from a leather pouch, and began to crush them, holding the pear-shaped stone by its smaller end and dropping it on the grain with a circular movement of her thin brown wrist. When the corn was broken to her liking, she scooped it forth onto a piece of birch bark and dipped again into the pouch.

While she was so occupied, a rather stout Indian emerged from the wigwam, stretching and yawning, and, after blinking a moment at the sun, seated himself with his back to a lodge-pole and leisurely filled the small bowl of his long blue-clay pipe. When it was ready he spoke to the woman and she, leaving her rude mortar and pestle, picked a hot coal from the fire with her bare fingers and gave it to him. Unconcernedly he took it from her, though it glowed so brightly that David could see it in the sunlight, and held it to the pipe-bowl. Then, emitting streamers of smoke from his nostrils, he

tossed the ember aside and settled himself contentedly. He smoked in the manner of his people, taking but one inhalation at a time and expelling it slowly, meanwhile holding the pipe away as though it had no more interest for him. Often a full minute elapsed between puffs, and David wondered that the pipe did not go out. The smoker was elderly and David guessed that he was lazy as well.

The ancient crone who had prepared David's breakfast for him now came waddling to the wigwam bearing a birchen tray whereon lay a piece of meat and some dried beans. The meat looked to be three or four ribs of some small animal, and David, knowing that the Indians were more partial than averse to dogs as food, shuddered and resolved to touch none of the meat until he had learned its kind. The old woman stopped where he sat and lowered the tray for his inspection, muttering a word or two of gibberish in a husky, whining voice. David looked, inwardly revolted, and nodded. There was, he knew, no use in asking her what sort of flesh it was, since she knew no word of English and his own knowledge of Nipmuck was not yet equal to comprehend-

ing what she might reply. Perhaps, too, he feared that reply might be "Awnam," which he believed to signify "dog." She disappeared inside with her treasures, and presently he heard the faint crackling of the wood as the flames took hold. How she had started the fire he could not imagine, for there had seemed to be only lifeless embers there before her coming, and she had surely not brought fire with her.

Meanwhile his neighbors were partaking of their meal. The stout Indian held a pointed stick in his hand and with it speared the strips of half-cooked meat from the kettle which the squaw had placed before him where he sat. From the kettle the meat went straight to his mouth, dripping upon him, whereupon, having laid aside his pipe, he used his hands to tear it apart or thrust it in. A few feet away the squaw sat on her heels, silently watchful. Occasionally, and only occasionally, the man, having drawn forth a strip of meat whose looks he did not favor, held it forth to the woman and she seized it from the end of the stick and transferred it quickly and hungrily to her mouth. Once the morsel dropped from the point of the stick to the earth, but she showed no

hesitation, rescuing it and not tarrying to see that it was clean ere she ate it. Between mouthfuls of meat they partook of the cracked corn. David, although no stranger to Indian manners, turned his eyes away in distaste.

About the village many other families were eating or preparing to eat, although as many more had evidently no thought for food. At the Natick village the Praying Indians had for some years conformed roughly to the English fashion of eating meals at regular and prescribed intervals, but the native custom of eating when hungry still held here. For that reason, so long as he remained, David could always, no matter at what time of day or early evening, find some one preparing food or consuming it. The Nipmucks were not great flesh-eaters, especially in the summer, he found, preferring vegetables and grains and fruits with an occasional meal of fish. As time wore on he discovered that his own food came from the sachem's stores and that it was evidently chosen for him with regard to the Indian's notion of what the white man preferred. Thus he was served with meat always once a day, although he would more often have

chosen to do without it, and fish was frequent. Also a certain regularity was observed by his ancient handmaiden, his morning meal being prepared for him ere he was more than half awake — indeed, it was often the fumes of the fire or the moving about of the squaw that aroused him — and the evening meal coming at about five in the afternoon. Not infrequently at first he grew hungry long before the second meal appeared, missing the hearty midday dinner to which he was accustomed, but before long he grew used to the new arrangement. Had he sought food at such times as he wished it, he would not have had far to seek, for the Indian, whatever faults he had, was never inhospitable. To tarry near where a family was eating was sufficient to draw an invitation, as David discovered one day. On that occasion, although he had no stomach for it, he partook of a loathsome stew of doubtful ingredients rather than seem discourteous, for it was his effort to make as many friends as he might.

This evening, ere his meal was ready for him, John returned, and to him David put the question: "What meat does the squaw cook?" After some difficulty John was made to understand and he went inside and spoke

to the squaw. When he returned he said, "Squaw say 'pequas.'"

"Pequas" meant fox, and David considered the matter for a minute. He had heard of foxes being eaten by the Indians: even on occasion by the English settlers, though not from choice; but it seemed to him that to have turned up his nose at dog-meat and now approve of fox-meat was foolish, for, save that one ran wild and other was tame, there could be little to choose between them. As a result of his cogitation, he ate little supper, for the half-boiled beans were both few and wretched. John ate the meat without demur.

Later they talked again as the darkness crept up the mountain and the scattered fires made orange-hued glows about the village. The talk was halting, however, and difficult, and before long David went to his hard couch and John, drawing his skin cloak about his bronze shoulders, squatted without the doorway and smoked. David's thoughts that night were wistful of home and his father, but not for long since sleep soon came to his still wearied body.

CHAPTER X

SEQUANAWAH PLEDGES FRIENDSHIP

On the morrow he was summoned to the sachem, and on entering the big wigwam found it half full of Indians. Most of them were young men, although a few were of middle-age and one quite old. In all there were some eighteen or twenty including the sachem himself and the interpreter of yesterday. The sachem's wife and the three children hovered in the background, and the dogs slunk about underfoot, as ever.

David bowed and gave the Nipmuck salutation and those present gravely responded. From the size of the audience and the air of gravity prevailing, David judged that Metipom had assembled his counselors to learn what the white man could tell them of the trouble between King Philip and the English. His surmise was soon proved correct, for after the sachem had inquired politely as to his "guest's" state of health and appetite, and had expressed the grave hope that he had enjoyed much sleep, he began, through the powwow, to question David about the

acts of the "wicked-hearted Pometacom." That the sachem had already received definite and fairly full information of the Wampanoags' insurrection was evident from the questions put. What Metipom and his counselors seemed most wishful of knowing was whether the Narragansett tribe would join Philip or the English. To this David truthfully answered that the Narragansetts had given their promise to remain neutral. The sachem then asked if the Quaboags had not cast in their lot with Pometacom. This David could not answer. He was asked about various other small tribes; the Nausets, the Pegans, and Niantics, and still more whose names he now heard for the first time. Of the Pegans he said that they were friends of the English and would remain so, having Monapikot's word for it. The Niantics he supposed to be of the Narragansett people, and they would take no part. As to the Nausets he knew nothing. His answers were discussed at length by the chief and his counselors, but whether they agreed or no with what information they already held David could not guess. In the end he was sent away courteously enough, leaving the assemblage still squatting about the wigwam.

He had thought when bidden to the sachem's lodge that his friends had come for him or sent overtures by some friendly Indian. Now, wandering about the dog-infested village, he found himself wondering why they had not done either. Surely, he reasoned, his absence could have gone unnoted no later than nightfall two days previous. His father might wait until morning before giving the alarm, but after that, action would, it seemed to him, be speedy. After the challenge of the blue-marked arrow it was not likely that his father would fail to connect his disappearance with Woosonametipom. Surely, he concluded, the rescue party would arrive not later than this evening.

Having reached the gate of the fort, he paused and looked forth. Several Indians were listlessly stirring the soil of little patches of tobacco, beans, corn, and squashes set between the outcropping boulders and patches of brush. None challenged him, and he was considering stepping outside to test the sachem's watchfulness when a mop of black hair thrust itself into sight from about a corner of the wall and a scowling countenance confronted him. "No can," growled

the sentinel. He placed his wooden spear across the gateway and rattled it fearsomely. David drew back. As he did so his glance lifted to the nearer of the two watch towers. Against the hot haze of the noonday sky a straight and motionless figure stood like a statue in bronze and gazed southward. With vastly more respect for Metipom's vigilance, David went slowly and thoughtfully back toward his wigwam.

Some of the younger lads were practicing shooting with their bows and arrows, their mark the bowl of a broken clay pipe which they had set up against the peeled logs of the palisade. David paused and looked on. Their bows were smaller than those of their fathers and their arrows shorter, and the range was not long, but David was surprised at the accuracy of their marksmanship. One youth, whose age could have been no more than ten, twice set the thorn-tipped head of his arrow close beside the tiny target, whereat David exclaimed, "Winnet! Winnet!" ("Good! Good!"), and the others began to cry "Winnet!" too, more, it seemed, for the sake of noise than aught else, while the small, naked boy, whose skin was the color of a young fawn, marched about with ridicu-

lous pompousness and chanted "Sasketup!" which meant "a great man." So absurd were the rascal's actions that David burst into a laugh, and that produced scowls and mutterings from the youth, for the Indians were sensitive to derision and the lad mistook David's amusement for ridicule. He stopped in his march of triumph, shook his small bow angrily, and launched into a shrill jumble of words, few of which David could understand. At their companion's anger the others howled gleefully, jumping about and striking attitudes. It seemed that what the boy was pouring forth was a challenge, for now he held forth his bow and an arrow and pointed to the mark. David, who had seldom attempted so difficult a shot with the native weapon, although he had frequently used a bow when hunting with Monapikot, hesitated. Whereupon the incensed lad became the more derisive, and his playmates, transferring their sympathies, joined in the chorus of taunts.

"Nay, then, I'll try it," said David, and accepted the bow and arrow.

They were scarcely more than toys to his long arms and the pipe-bowl looked very small. But he set the notch into the string,

drew, and shot. The arrow, lighter than he had reckoned, stuck its head more than a foot below the mark, although on a good line with it. "Sasketup" viewed the result with supreme contempt, and the comments of his companions were, while unintelligible to David, plainly unflattering.

"Arrow him too short," said a voice behind him, and David turned to see Sequanawah, his captor of two days ago. Sequanawah took an arrow from one of the larger boys and held it forth. "You try um," he said. David had better fortune this time, for the arrow struck less than an inch above the mark. "Winnet!" grunted the boys and "Good shoot," said Sequanawah.

Several of the youths crowded about David and offered their arrows for him to try, but he shook his head, laughing, thinking it well to stop before he had, by a worse shot, destroyed what renown he had gained. The lad who had challenged scowled crestfallenly as David turned away and called a shrill taunt after him. The words David did not know, but their meaning was evident enough: "I dare you to try again, Englishman!"

To David's surprise, Sequanawah accompanied him to the wigwam and there squatted

inside with the manner of one paying a visit of ceremony. Gravely David offered hospitality.

"Will you eat meat?" he asked.

Sequanawah shook his head. "Me full."

In that case, as David knew, he should offer pipe and tobacco. Not having either, however, he smiled and pointed to the pouch that hung at the Indian's girdle. "You smoke," he said.

Sequanawah bowed and drew pipe and pouch to his knees and filled his bowl gravely and in silence. That done, he searched in the blackened embers of the fire and presently brought forth a tiny coal that showed a gray ash. On this he breathed gently. The flakey ash disappeared and gradually a glow of fire took its place. To David the performance smacked of the miraculous, for he would have sworn that the ember was as dead as any that Sequanawah had cast aside. When his pipe was lighted, the Wachoosett smoked for a minute in silence, his dark eyes fixed on the ground. Then he laid the pipe beside him and spoke.

"Um well?" he asked.

"Aye, brother."

The Indian nodded as with satisfaction.

"David man good shoot," he went on. "Um shoot plenty um shoot more good. Um got cossaquot?"

"Cossaquot?" repeated David.

"Aye, cossaquot." He drew an imaginary bow-string, snapped his thumb and fore-finger apart, and gazed through the wigwam door.

"You mean bow and arrows? Nay, I no got cossaquot, brother."

"Me make um you plenty good. You shoot um all-time. You be good shoot, good fight, good hunt."

"Thank you, Sequanawah; I should like that."

"Aye," grunted the Indian.

Conversation lapsed. Sequanawah replaced the stem of his pipe between his lips and smoked awhile. At last he emptied the ashes from the bowl, arose and walked to the entrance. There he turned, laid a hand on his heart, and then pointed to David. "Sequanawah um brother," he said simply. "Nawhaw nissis."

"Farewell," returned David. "May your meat do you much good."

He was glad to have gained Sequanawah's friendship, although whether it would profit

him any remained to be seen. Sequanawah had attended the conference in the sachem's wigwam that morning, which indicated that he was a counselor and one of the tribe's principal men, perhaps a captain amongst the warriors. In which case his avowal of friendship might result most fortunately. Later, David sought to learn more of Sequanawah from John, but the latter's English was too povern.

It was mid-afternoon, toward the end of the sleep-hour, when David, seated rather disconsolately in the shade outside his lodge, saw two Indians approaching. He knew neither by sight, although he had already learned to recognize a good many of the inhabitants of the village. Both were young men and each was armed with tomahawk, knife, and spear. They motioned to him to accompany them and he did so. They led the way toward the sachem's lodge, but instead of entering they went past. From within the wigwam David heard the voice of Woosonametipom and another. The two Indians went on toward the gate. David saw that the watch tower was no longer occupied. At the opening in the palisade one of the Indians fell in behind David and they passed through.

So far as the boy could see, the gate was no longer guarded. Looking down the slope toward the belt of forest, his gaze was attracted by a faint column of smoke that seemed to arise from the meadow beyond the forest. The garden patches were deserted and the leaves of the tobacco plants hung limply in the hot sun. To the left they went, making their way between bushes and over brambles and following no perceptible trail until the shadow of the woods met them. Keeping at the edge of the trees, the Indian who led proceeded for the better part of a mile, thus presently losing sight of the village as the curve of the hill intervened. It was hot and sultry and the pace was fast, and David, being well weighted with clothing in comparison with his companions, was soon in a fine perspiration.

He wondered greatly where they were taking him and why. He had, however, no fear. If harm was to come to him, it would come in the village, for the Indians would make a public event of his torture or execution and not conduct either secretly. What seemed the most probable was that the Indian outposts had sent word that his friends were approaching and that he was being

taken away to some place of hiding. When, after another half-mile, the leader turned down the slope and entered a park-like expanse of oaks and at last came to a stop, David knew that his surmise had been correct. Before them was a ledge of rock outcropping from the forest floor. A giant oak with a twisted trunk sent sprawling roots above and about it, and one root, the taproot as it seemed, had gone straight down through a crevice in the ledge and, gradually increasing in size, had forced the rock apart so that there lay a narrow opening, half-hidden by ferns. Into this the first Indian squirmed and was instantly gone from sight. Somewhat hesitantly, David followed, and being clothed and wider of shoulder, would have stuck in the aperture had not the second Indian shoved upon him. Thereupon David went free and found his feet scrabbling on broken particles of stone and himself in a sudden and confusing darkness.

"Hub," said the Indian ahead, and as "hub" meant "come," David, feeling his way, followed. For several paces the path led steeply downward. Then the earth became level and David stopped. Behind him the second Indian was scuffling softly down to

join them. As his eyes accustomed themselves to the change from daylight to gloom, David made out dimly that he was standing in a roomy cave. It appeared to be a half-dozen paces in width, more than the height of a man from floor to roof and of indeterminable depth. It was refreshingly cool down there. David's companions seated themselves between him and the narrow passage that led upward and out, and through which the daylight entered subduedly, and stolidly filled their pipes. There being naught else to do, David likewise seated himself on the ground, finding a spot where the wall of rock provided a rest for his shoulders. The floor of the cave was dry, seeming to consist of the powdered particles of the granite ledge above, although, as he discovered after being seated awhile, there were occasional sharp fragments of stone as well.

He wondered how long he would have to stay there. The thought that even now his father or others from his country might be no more than two miles distant filled him with discouragement and a sort of dull anger. They would be welcomed by the sachem and entertained with food and tobacco, and all their questioning would come to naught.

Though they searched high and low and never so carefully they would find no trace of him. Sitting there in the half-light of the cavern, the only sound the soft sucking of the Indians' pipes, the boy's thoughts were far from happy, and once his eyes grew moist ere, with a shrug of impatience for his weakness, he forced back the tears.

CHAPTER XI

THE CAVE IN THE FOREST

When the light that came in by the narrow cleft in the ledge had grown dim, the Indians produced food, dried fish that smelled none too good and parched corn, and shared them with the captive. David was not hungry, but ate as he might, for the idea of making his escape ere the night was over had come to him, and should he find an opportunity to make the attempt he would be better for food in his stomach. After the brief meal one of the Indians disappeared and presently returned with water in a fold of birch bark. By then the cave was utterly black and David could no longer see his companions. The latter, who had spoken to each other but seldom during the afternoon, now became talkative, and David amused himself in trying to understand something of their conversation. But it was no use, for, although now and then a sound that was familiar came to him, the most of it was gibberish. Perhaps two hours passed, and then once more the entrance to the cave was

illumined, though but dimly, as the starlight flooded the open wood. David was resolved to let no chance go by, and for that reason fought hard against the sleep that weighted his eyelids. If, he reasoned, he could in some manner get past the Indians and through the entrance without their knowledge, he might elude them in the gloom of the forest and, by traveling eastward, discover the trail leading to Sudbury and there lie in wait for the returning party of his friends. The Indians gradually ceased their talk and silence fell again. At last one of them stirred and spoke briefly. The other responded with a grunt and the entrance was darkened momentarily as the first speaker slipped out of the cavern.

David lay down then and simulated slumber, breathing regularly. He would have given much to have known whither the other savage had gone; whether back to the village or only to some post of watching near by. Peering across the cave, he saw the glow of the Indian's pipe at intervals. Then it went out and silence settled more deeply. After a long while the Indian muttered, sighed, and then began to breathe heavily and with a rasping sound. David's heart beat fast while

he waited for his jailer to sink more deeply in slumber. Ten minutes passed, and then, with only such sound as was caused by his knees and toes on the gravel floor, he started to creep toward the entrance. To reach it he must pass close to the Indian, for the latter was near the middle of the cave, his form discernible against the faint light of the opening. He had not laid himself down, but had fallen asleep where he sat, his head fallen forward on his chest.

A few inches at a time was all David dared attempt, ready to sink to the ground and pretend sleep at the first token of wakefulness on the part of the savage. When he had brought himself to within arm's reach of the sleeper, the latter's breathing broke in a mutter and the boy dropped to the floor and lay very still. The Indian stirred, changed his position slightly, it seemed, and then, when a long moment had passed, sank back to sleep. David's heart was beating so hard and so fast that the sound of it, like the ticking of a great clock, seemed to fill the cavern, and he almost expected that the noise of it would awaken the Indian.

At last he was well past and the ground sloped upward to the narrow crevice beyond

which the purple night sky lay. He paused long and listened. The Indian still breathed regularly. He took a deep breath and went forward, rising now to his feet and guiding himself by his hands along the narrowing walls. Once a stone, disturbed by his tread, trickled downward with a noise that, to David, sounded loud enough to wake the very dead, and it was only by a great effort of will that he held himself silent there and did not, in a sudden panic, rush up the rest of the ascent.

The noise failed to disturb the sleeper. An Indian, although David did not know it then, sleeps deeply and is difficult to awake, and to that fact he doubtless owed the moment's escape. After an instant, during which his heart gradually sank back from his throat, or seemed to, he went on. By turning sidewise he had no great difficulty in getting through the mouth of the crevice, and as his body brushed the ferns aside a flood of warm air enveloped him. He crouched motionless at the entrance and gazed sharply about him in the confusion of starlight and shadow.

Under the great oaks which were spaced well apart as though planted by man, the gloom was deep and impenetrable. In the

open spaces the light of a million twinkling stars made blue pools of dim radiance wherein David could make out the shapes of fern patches or the crouching form of a rock. Somewhere in the higher branches of a tree a bird twittered sleepily. Afar off an owl hooted. For the rest only the silence of a hot, breathless night.

He dared not stay where he was for long lest the Indian behind should awake and, seeking him, discover his flight, while to move forward meant risking recapture in case the other savage, he who had gone from the cave earlier in the evening, was on guard near by. But once well away from his prison, David believed he would be safe so long as darkness lasted, and to get away he must risk the presence of the second savage. Moving cautiously, testing each step that he took, he drew himself away from the cavern entrance and the edge of the shadowed patch beneath the twisted oak. Monapikot had taught him the skill that takes one through the woods in silence, even in the night when the other senses must make up for sight, and David caused scarce the swaying of a fern frond as he made his slow way up the gentle slope, keeping always to the shadows. Fortunately

there was little underbrush save patches of fern and brake, and the ground was soft in most places with its carpet of dead and rotting leaves and took his footfalls in silence. Only once ere he drew nigh the edge of the oak forest did he make a sound. Then, for the moment neglecting caution, he set his foot on a dead twig and it snapped beneath his weight with the sudden report of a tiny pistol. He stopped short and crouched back amongst the black shadows and listened anxiously. And it was well that he did so, for when an instant had passed there came to him the sound of a man's sleepy yawn from some spot not many paces away to his left!

The Indian who had left the cave was watching from above, watching, perhaps, lest the English find the tracks they had left and approach by the open ground!

David, appalled by the narrow margin of his escape from walking almost straight into the hands of the enemy, trembled a little as he sank back on his heels and, scarcely daring to breathe, stared intently in the direction of the sound. But the Indian was not visible to him, although he searched every foot of gloomy forest above the cave until his eyes

ached. He had meant to gain the open space whereby they had approached in the afternoon, and thus, following, as well as memory would allow, their trail, come within distant sight of the palisade and then dip down the lower slope of the mountain and so reach the trail to the south. But to do that now he must pass below the cave and keep to the forest until well beyond the position of the sentinel and not until then emerge into the open. At all hazards, he told himself, he would put much space between himself and the Indian there, even if in so doing he lost all sense of direction. It were better to risk being lost than recapture.

Acting on this resolve, he slipped around the great bole of an oak and, keeping it between him and the spot from whence the sound of the yawn had come, stole obliquely down the slope. He made but slow progress, for in the hush of the woods even the flicking of a branch or the crunch of an acorn might arouse the suspicions of the sentinel. The Indian hearing is very acute and David had heard amazing instances of it. Slowly, stealthily he went, and not until a full two hundred paces had been traversed did he turn at something less than a right angle to

his course and make along the hill well below the cave. The forest was less park-like here, and saplings, whether of oak or maple he was not able to say, made travel more difficult. Low branches must be felt for and carefully bent aside and as carefully released, while the earth beneath held more litter of fallen twigs. Absolute silence was well-nigh impossible now, and he must trust to the distance between him and his foe. It was warm in the forest, warm and humid, and the boy's body was soon bathed in perspiration and his hands sweated so that his grasp on the impeding branches sometimes slipped and they whipped his face cruelly and seemed determined to reveal his presence. But after a while he breathed more freely and stopped to rest.

He was very weary now and would have asked nothing better than to have lain himself down and slept. But in spite of all his painful travel, he was still but a short distance from the cave, and had he failed to awaken before dawn would of a certainty been soon found. He reckoned on at least four hours yet before the light and in those four hours meant to put as many miles between him and his Indian guards. That they

would find him eventually, unless he were fortunate enough to intercept the English party on their way back, was certain, for they would find his tracks in the forest and follow them as a hound follows the scent of a fox. His hope, therefore, lay in reaching the Indian trail to the south while darkness still held and there lying in wait for his friends. After that his fate was in the hands of Providence. If his pursuers came first, his efforts would have been in vain.

Midges or some other small insects annoyed him while he rested, and once a prowling animal, no larger than a small dog, slunk out of the gloom but a pace away and startled him with the green fires of its staring eyes. David moved but his foot and the beast was gone with a snarl. Up the slope he went then, from shadow patch to shadow patch, the trees thinning, and presently the open ground, rock-strewn, bush-grown, lay before him in the soft radiance of the stars. He heaved a deep sigh of relief, for somehow emerging from the gloom of the forest seemed like stepping from a dark prison into freedom. But freedom was not yet his, as he well knew, and, glancing uneasily to the left toward where, perhaps a quarter of a mile

away, the sentinel watched, he made off with swift steps toward the village, keeping always to the dark marge of the forest.

He speedily found that haste and quiet would not agree, for in the gloom he caught a foot in a tangle of root or vine and measured his length, exclaiming in spite of himself when his chin came rudely down on a stone. Thereafter he went more slowly. When a half-hour had gone by, a faint flush of light met his sight. It was, he believed, the dim yellow glare of a fire in the village showing above the wall. He went on more cautiously, the light drawing nearer yet becoming more faint, as if the fire were dying. At last he imagined that he could when crouching to the ground make out the fort perhaps a quarter of a mile away. He dared go no closer lest there be guards set outside the palisade, and so he turned into the forest, first fixing his gaze on a great star more brilliant than its fellows and burning with a redder light that hung in the heavens to the southeast. He would be guided by that, he thought. But once in the forest the orb was instantly lost to him, for here there were pines and hemlocks growing so closely together that only now and again could he

glimpse a bit of the sky between their clustering branches. Smaller trees and bushes fought for life beneath the evergreens and ever he must step aside this way or that until before long all sense of direction had left him and he went on in a blackness that had no relief, trusting to fortune.

That he would know the trail should he come to it seemed too much to hope for now. It seemed far more likely that, if his progress, indeed, led him in the right direction, he would cross the forest path without knowledge. And so, when some time had passed, he became doubly watchful for a thinning out of the underbrush, and when the trees seemed less closely set he went no farther until he had satisfied himself that he had not reached the trail. It was difficult going for more reasons than the forest growth, for fallen trees barred his way and clutched at his clothing with stark and splintered hands. He had lost all knowledge of time. It seemed to him that he had been fighting through the woods for hours and that daylight must now be no more than just beyond the world's rim. But the thick, velvety blackness continued and the sky, when infrequently seen, looked no lighter than before. He grew hopeless and

despondent, certain that he had fallen into the easy error of circling, not sure that the trail was not behind him instead of before. Weariness took toll of hope. Every muscle in his body ached and his lungs grew sore. Pauses for rest, during which he leaned against a tree or subsided on a fallen log, fighting for breath and against the languor that threatened to bring sleep upon him, became more and more frequent.

In the end he grew to care no whit what fate befell him if only he might sleep. And yet some voice at the back of his tired brain called him awake whenever his eyes closed and sent him staggering on again. And thus, at length, what wits remained to him stayed his steps and sent him feeling about in the darkness, while hope surged back to his heart. Behind him were trees, but to the right and to the left were none until he had twice stepped forward! Turning to the right he went cautiously ahead. Nothing impeded him. More, his feet trod hard earth between the crawling roots of the pines. He dropped to his knees and felt the ground. Clean it was, and the roots that crossed it were worn with many feet. He had found the trail!

CHAPTER XII

DAVID FACES DEATH

FEELING his way back to where the hanging branches of a small hemlock promised to screen him from the trail, David sank to the ground with a shivering sigh of relief. While it might be that a long and weary vigil awaited him, yet to be able to stretch his aching body and relax his taut muscles was a blissful thing. When his breathing had quieted, the sounds of the night, unheard or unnoted while he journeyed, came to him eerily: the faint stirrings of small animals, the scratching noise of a raccoon or hedgehog clawing his way up a tree-trunk, a brief flurry in the brush a little way off and the agonized squeal of some tiny victim surprised by the slayer, and, suddenly, shudderingly near, the long-drawn howl of a wolf.

The latter sound brought to the boy a realization of his unarmed condition. Not even a knife did he have. He sought within his reach for some branch that might serve for a club, but found nothing. After all, it mattered little, for it was not wolves but Indians

that he feared, and against them such a weapon would avail none. As for the wolves, he had little fear of them, knowing them to be cowards at heart, attacking only when in force and having no liking for man. He tried desperately to keep his eyes open, but they would close in spite of his efforts, whereupon his head would drop and he would pull himself back from the abyss of sleep with a frightened start. He told himself that, when he had rested but a little longer, he would take the trail and travel southward, so placing more distance between him and his enemies, walking until daylight should force him again into concealment. But even as he thought this, his lids closed again and his chin sank. This time he did not start into wakefulness. After a moment his body slid over sidewise, he gave a long, deep sigh and slept.

When he awoke a saffron light filled the woods and birds were calling high in the branches. Dawn had come while he slept, and his heart sank as he realized that perhaps his weakness had lost him the reward of his efforts. It might well be that the English had passed southward already. In the stupor that had held him it would have taken more than the tread of feet on the trail or the

sound of a voice to alarm him. He peered forth from his leafy screen and strove to read the trail, but the well-trod earth told him nothing. He was at an elbow of the path. A few paces away in each direction it bent eastward. Already the leaves of a witch hazel were pale with the first rays of sunlight that filtered down through the thick forest. No longer was it possible for him to travel the trail, though it might be that by proceeding slowly and with much caution he could follow it through the woods. But he was sore and stiff in every muscle and his hands and face, whipped and scratched by the branches, were tender to the touch. He still craved rest, and yet he knew that should the English not come soon from the village, their coming would concern him little, for already the Indians were doubtless seeking him. For the first time it occurred to him that, after all, he had no certain knowledge that his friends had come for him yesterday. There might be some other reason for concealing him in the cave. Perchance an alarm had been brought to the fort that later had proven false. The thought dismayed him and for a moment he contemplated taking the trail boldly and making what haste his tired limbs would al-

low, trusting to luck to meet none who would question, and so escaping out of the Wachoosett country ere pursuit reached him. But second thoughts showed the futility of that design. Even had he been fresh and untired, he could not have traveled at a speed great enough to elude the Indian runners. No, if the English did not come shortly and he was still free, he would make his way through the forest at what haste he might until darkness and then take advantage of the trail.

Anxiously he waited and watched. Every stirring of the leaves brought his heart into his throat. He was parched for water, but dared not leave the trail to seek it. An hour passed and hope passed with it, for he was convinced that his friends, did they mean to travel back that day, would have made an early start and ere this have passed his hiding-place. Either, then, they had not come yesterday to the village or they had gone by while he slept. He could have wept with disappointment. Hunger began to make itself felt, and he crawled a few yards to where a black birch grew and broke some twigs from it and gnawed them. He had but settled in his place again when his eyes, fixed on the trail to the north, shouted hope to his heart.

Something had moved beyond the leaves there! An instant later around the bend came an Indian. Hope vanished and fear took its place, for the savage was not the vanguard of the English searching party, but he who had kept watch last night above the cave!

Softly yet swiftly he came, his tomahawk in hand, his head turning from side to side as he peered with sharp eyes into the forest. David dropped to the ground, scarce breathing. Somewhere behind him in the depths of the wood an owl hooted. The Indian stopped abruptly and swept the forest with his gaze. David saw the brown fingers about the haft of the tomahawk tighten. Again came the owl's tremulous call, this time much nearer, and David's heart sank sickeningly, for he knew that the sound came from no owl and that his brief freedom was near its end. Turning his head, he looked behind him. At first there was naught to be seen. Then the branch of hemlock quivered slightly some dozen paces distant and beside it something redder than the bole of the tree showed in the sunlit haze. The soft padding of moccasined feet drew his gaze to the trail again, and any lingering hope he may have had of escaping detection

died, for the first Indian was coming straight toward his hiding-place, his black eyes aglitter and his thin mouth curved in a snarling grin. They were closing in on him, front and back, and flight was useless. Yet to be taken without an effort was not in his mind, and, leaping to his feet, he brushed past the branches that had hidden him and sprang onto the trail. There was a cry from the savage nearest at hand, but David heeded it not, but fled fast, his weariness forgotten.

And yet he knew that he could not hope to elude his pursuers. Even as he sped around the turn of the trail, he heard the patter of skin-clad feet behind him and thought to feel the blow of a thrown tomahawk each instant. Some sixty paces he made ere disaster came. Then a tired foot failed to lift itself above a sprawling root and the boy crashed forward and went rolling over and over into the bushes. Jarred and confused, he strove to regain his feet, but the first of his foes was beside him. A snarling copper-hued face glared down at him and a knife was poised above his heart.

David saw and yielded. "Netop!" he gasped. The Indian grunted and pressed the point of the knife closer, and the

boy, looking up into the blazing eyes, read murder in them. What he did then was done without thought, in the consuming horror that gripped him. Quickly lifting a foot, he thrust it at the savage's stomach. The latter fell backward with a grunt of pain, the knife dropped from his hand, and David, rolling swiftly to one side, sprang to his feet. But the Indian was up almost as soon as he. Not heeding the knife underfoot, he seized his tomahawk and sprang at the boy, his eyes glaring with pain and hatred and the lust to kill. David turned to flee, but a branch had caught at his torn doublet and now, ere he could wrest himself away, the Wachoosett was on him. David saw the tomahawk swing upward and back, heard the savage's indrawn breath rattle in his throat, and knew that the end of all things on earth had come to him, even as, instinctively, he threw up an arm to ward the blow. Then, as the weapon swept down upon him, a form rushed between, the murderous arm was grasped and dragged aside, and the blow ended weakly in air.

The second Indian spoke harshly and with authority as David, weak with revulsion, staggered against a tree. What he said

the boy did not know, but it answered, for the first savage, after a flow of high-pitched, angry words, yielded grumblingly and moved aside. David's rescuer pointed to the trail sternly and David moved wearily away toward the village. He realized that only fear of the sachem had caused the Indian to intervene, for there was naught of mercy or gentleness in the brave's harsh countenance. When David had gone a few paces, the first savage passed him swiftly and took the lead, and so they went for a way, the boy's limbs trembling with weariness and his feet dragging. Then the leader turned from the trail and entered the forest and the journey became vastly more difficult. Once, surmounting a fallen tree, David toppled across it and rolled to the ground beyond, and would have stayed there gladly had not the second savage threatened him with his knife. He staggered to his feet again and toiled on. Presently they came to a brook and he made signs that he was thirsty and they allowed him to drink. That put new strength into his body and he made better progress. He believed that they were taking him back to the cave, and from that argued that the reason for his banishment from the village, what-

ever it might be, still existed. But before long they stopped in a small clearing and his captors gave him some parched corn to eat and ate some themselves. Then the Indian who had led the way disappeared through the forest toward where David thought the village must lie. The boy stretched himself upon the ground and, watched sourly by the remaining savage, soon slept the sleep of exhaustion.

He awoke with a hand tugging at his shirt. The Indian who had gone away was back, and when David had got sleepily to his feet they went on once more, this time toward the village. But a few minutes brought them to the edge of the forest, and there, no more than a half-mile distant, stood the palisade. And so, tired and discouraged, ragged and bruised, David came again to the gate in the fort and back into captivity. Past the Indian hovels and the snarling dogs, observed incuriously by the inhabitants, past the great lodge of the sachem, he was led to his own wigwam and there, pushed ungently through the entrance by his captors, he fell to the ground and knew no more for a long while.

When he awoke it was late afternoon. He was sore and weary, and, although he had no

mirror to view himself by, he knew that his face was cut and scratched in many places. He awoke as one awakes after a bad dream, the sense of impending misfortune weighting his spirits. It took him a long moment, however, to recall the history of the past twenty-four hours. Memory supplied the record in fragments and his confused brain found difficulty in arranging them in their sequence. When it had done so, a greater depression seized him. He had lost his chance. His friends had come and gone. Moreover, Metipom would doubtless punish him for the attempted escape. Life looked very drab to David just then.

His reflections were disturbed by the pat of moccasined feet on the trampled ground outside and the entrance was darkened as the Indian whose duty it was to watch him and wait upon him entered. John showed such evident pleasure at seeing the captive again that David's spirits momentarily lightened.

Squatting beside him, John produced his pipe and hazarded a few words of English.

"How you do?" he asked. "White brother plenty well?"

"Matchanni," answered David. "Very sick."

John shook his head and groaned, thus expressing his sympathy. Then, ere he realized what was happening, David found himself alone again, for the young Indian had arisen and glided to the door in what seemed one movement. David sighed. He craved companionship and even John was better than no one.

But the Indian was soon back, the palm of one hand filled with a yellow-brown grease with which he began to anoint the boy's face.

"Much good," he explained.

"It smells not good," grumbled David.

But he was glad of the service, and, indeed, the smarting and burning of the lacerations ceased as though by magic. Then John bade him remove his clothes and rubbed the salve wherever a bruise showed. Afterwards, at David's request, he brought water in a fold of bark. Refreshed, David sought information of his friends, but the Indian looked blank and shook his head and David gave up.

The old squaw appeared with a few live embers and an armful of fagots and made a fire, and to escape the smoke, David arose, not without a groan, and went outside and

seated himself in the shade of the wigwam. John took himself off to his own lodge presently.

Many fires were burning and the village was hazy with the smoke of them. At a little distance, beside the log barrier, a knot of older boys were throwing flat stones at a stake driven into the earth, and their cries came to him shrilly. The sun was sinking behind a shoulder of the great hill and its slanting rays filled the world with a soft amber radiance. It was a fair and peaceful scene, yet David had never felt more lonely and homesick. The ancient squaw came to the entrance and signed that his food was ready, and he went in to it, though with little appetite. As he nibbled at the stewed meat and beans, he wondered why the sachem had not summoned him for punishment, and wondered what the punishment would be. Yet no summons came, and he went early to sleep, both because he was still weary and because he wished to forget his loneliness. Outside, his jailer sat silent in his blanket and blew clouds of smoke at the star-sprinkled sky.

CHAPTER XIII

A FRIEND IN STRANGE GUISE

When the succeeding day had passed without sign from Metipom, David came to the conclusion that the Indians from whom he had escaped had refrained from reporting the incident to the sachem for fear of his wrath, which was, indeed, the true explanation. Relieved of the apprehension of punishment, David's spirits returned and he gave thought to practical matters. Next to his imprisonment the thing that troubled him most just now was the state of his breeches! None too new when he had been captured, the flight through the forest had left them in tatters. Indeed, they momentarily threatened to part from him altogether! His shirt and doublet were likewise in sorry case, but troubled him less. It seemed to him that those breeches were past all human aid, even had he possessed thread and needle wherewith to mend them. He was still ruefully deliberating when Sequanawah came to him bearing the bow that he had promised and five arrows. Admiration of these put the

other matter from his mind for the time, yet, when he had heartily thanked the Indian and had examined the weapon from tip to tip, twanging the cord and experimentally fitting the notch of a stone-tipped arrow to it, he recalled his quandary and drew Sequanawah's attention to them.

The Indian viewed the dilapidated garments gravely, finally grunting: "No good. Take um off."

"Aye, but what shall I put on instead?" asked David.

Sequanawah suggested a costume like his own, a loin-cloth wound about his middle, one end falling in front and one behind. But David shook his head dubiously, and after a moment of thought the Indian grunted again and made off. When he returned he brought a pair of deer-hide breeches such as were worn in winter. Where he had obtained them David did not know, for they were far too short for Sequanawah, but fitted the boy well enough. In exchange the Indian took the discarded breeches, from which he gleefully cut the two buckles. These, a few days later, David discovered dangling from a string of wampum about Sequanawah's neck.

Each day thereafter David practiced with

the new bow, Sequanawah teaching. There was much to learn. First, the cord must be of the right tension, and, since it was of rawhide, it seemed never twice the same. Then the arrow must be chosen with a view to both distance and conditions of air. With a hard wind blowing across the course of the flight, a heavy arrow was needed, and so when the distance was great; and to that end the missiles that Sequanawah had provided varied both in length, thickness, and head. There was, it appeared, both a right way and a wrong way to draw the bow; or, rather, there was one right way and several wrong ways; and for a time David found only the latter. At first the boy felt embarrassment because of the audience that gathered, for all the old men of the village as well as many of the younger stood by and discussed each shot. But before long he became accustomed to them and minded not their grunts of disapproval or their guttural words of approbation. It was soon evidenced to him that his tutor was one of the tribe's most skillful handlers of the bow. This he could tell both from the marvelous shots that Sequanawah made and from the evident respect paid him by the others. He was a stern yet patient

teacher, and it was not long ere his pupil began to comport himself creditably and to earn praise from even his tutor.

Meanwhile David had not ceased wondering what had taken place during his absence from the village, and one day, when he had shot better than ever, he took courage in hand and put the question to Sequanawah. Being a counselor, the Indian might well resent being questioned, as David knew, and it was not without misgiving that the boy asked.

Sequanawah was silent a moment, and David feared that he was offended. But presently he answered:

"One time come English, make talk with Great Sachem, have food, have sleep, go away in morning."

"Saw you them, Sequanawah?"

"Aye, me see um."

"Was one a tall man, wide of shoulder, with a long beard?"

"Maybe so. One was Indian."

"A Pegan?" asked the boy, thinking of Monapikot. "A young Indian?"

Sequanawah shook his head. "Old man, him. Maybe Pegan, maybe Nipmuck."

"And how many were there who came?"

"Four white men, one Indian."

"Were they — were they seeking me, Sequanawah?"

The Indian's countenance became blank and he shook his head. "Me not know. Maybe so. Maybe hunt."

No more than that would he tell, but David had learned enough to know that his father had sought him, as he had believed. For the rest of the day he sat beside his wigwam and conjectured on what lie Woosonametipom had told the searching party, who, besides his father, had made the journey, what conclusion they had come to, and what further steps they would take. Already a week had passed and nothing further had transpired looking to his rescue. He wondered how fared the war with King Philip and what things had happened to the southward. Doubtless by now the chief of the Wampanoags had been properly subdued. As to the latter he questioned both John and Sequanawah, but each professed ignorance. Twice he held converse with the sachem, once when Metipom paused where David was shooting at a mark set against the palisade wall and once when the chief summoned him to his lodge and, through an

interpreter, inquired as to his health and contentment. On the latter occasion David had begged to be given his liberty and the powwow had answered:

"Great Sachem say by and by he give you guide and send you back safe."

"And why not now?" David had asked boldly.

The medicine man shook his head. "Bad Indians catch um now. Kill um. Not safe you go now. By and by you go."

And with that promise he had perforce to content himself.

Truth it is that David had by now come to accept his lot with fair grace. Indeed, had it not been for the thought of the sorrow which his father was put to and for the uncertainty as to his ultimate fate, David might have found real enjoyment with his captors. There was much to interest him. He was fast learning their language and fast coming to a better and more sympathetic understanding of their ways of life and of thought. Woosonametipom he could never like, but there were others for whom he had a friendly feeling: Sequanawah and John and a certain gray-locked old man named Quinnapasso and others. And, he believed, these

returned his liking. Quinnapasso was very ancient. Sequanawah said that he was the oldest Indian in the world. He had been a famous warrior and hunter and was still greatly respected for his wisdom and still held his place in Metipom's council. In spite of his age and feebleness of body, his eyes were still bright and clear and his trembling hands had not lost their cunning. All day long he sat at the entrance of his wigwam and fashioned pipes of black and red and gray stone, and thither David frequently went and, sitting beside him, talked a little with him in Nipmuck and watched the skillful way in which he chiseled and drilled the blocks of porphyry and sandstone brought to him by his grand-daughter. Quinnapasso's pipes were much sought and brought him many skins and much wampum and food. David became the recipient of one, which he was loath to take until he saw that his hesitation was wounding the old man. Whereupon he thanked Quinnapasso in halting Nipmuck and the pipe-maker nodded and grinned and mumbled through toothless gums.

As August approached, the village became more busy. The women set out in parties of

ten or a dozen in the morning and returned at night well laden with fish which the next day was dried and cured on platforms of boughs beneath which fires of green wood burned. The squaws also gathered flags for the later weaving of mats and baskets. The mats were used more often than skins for the walls of their houses. Many other uses were found for them, and they were dyed by the women in several colors. Corn was beginning to tassel and the squashes — planted wherever a pocket of soil allowed the dropping of the queer flat seeds — showed great yellow blossoms. There was much work for the women, to whom fell what cultivation was done in the straggling garden patches. Also, it became their duty to see that pits were dug for the autumn storing of the corn, and to line them well with bark. The men, it seemed to David, worked not at all, unless hunting and trapping might be called labor. Even fishing they left to the squaws. Occasionally one could be found hammering an ornament from a piece of metal, or, maybe, fashioning arrows or bows or spears. As for wampumpeag, or wampum as the English called it, it seemed that the Wachoosetts made none themselves, but bartered for it

with other tribes. As this money was made from seashells — the word wampumpeag signifying a mussel in the Iroquois language — it was doubtlessly difficult for tribes living inland to secure material to work with. Nevertheless David saw much of it and many marvelous examples of the curious and even beautiful shapes into which it was wrought: those of birds and animals and flowers. In color it was usually black or white, the black being of slightly more value, but there were also many shades between; purple, blue, brown, yellow, and pink. By combining the various colors and shades the beads were often made into wonderful patterns on belts, necklaces, bracelets, ear-links, and other ornaments. Woosonametipom when royally bedecked wore a head-dress of wampum as well as a broad and long girdle which went twice about his body and ended in a fringe of deer-hair dyed red.

When the second week of David's captivity had merged into a third, the village was one morning aroused from its placidness by the appearance of three strange Indians. Their approach had been signalled from afar, and by the time they were crossing the open space between forest and village many

of the male inhabitants had gathered to greet them. The sun was yet but a scant five hours above the horizon, but the heat was already intolerable and the rocky slope shimmered and glared as the naked strangers drew near. All were young men and all were armed and painted most hideously. One, of the three the more heavy of build, carried upon his back a bundle wrapped in rush matting. His companions, taller and slimmer, bore only their weapons and food pouches. Woosonametipom, attended by several of his counselors, and himself decked in his "royalty" of embroidered blanket and wampum head-dress and girdle, awaited the visitors at the gate. When the strangers were a dozen paces distant they paused and gave salutation. The Wachoosetts returned it, whereupon one of the strangers stepped forward and spoke at length, addressing his remarks to the sachem, but seeming to include all his hearers. He was listened to in absolute silence. David, pressing toward the gate behind the throng of young men and old, women and children, who had gathered just inside it, understood enough of the brave's talk to know that he was but declaiming the usual message of greeting from one chief to

another, a message filled with compliments to the hearer's wisdom and courage and nobility. Yet one word that was twice spoken produced each time a ripple of movement from the throng and, or so David felt, a current of excitement. That word was Pometacom.

From where he stood, well within the palisade, David caught but uncertain glimpses of the visitors between the heads of the group about him, for the gateway was narrow and the strangers stood a little to one side. Yet at times a painted visage moved into his sight for a fleeting instant and aroused a sense of familiarity. The countenance seemed strange and yet dimly known. Above it a glistening scalp-lock, reeking with oil, was wound with crimson cloth and adorned with yellow and blue feathers. A rude painting of a duck was done in white on the man's forehead and each cheek held a crude and uncertain design in the same pigment, while across the bridge of the nose and beneath the eyes ran two stripes. In his ears were bone pendants, carved to strange shapes. He was tall and straight and well-muscled, and bore himself with an air of authority that well fitted him. All this David could not see at

the moment. Had he done so doubtless the stirrings of memory would have been stronger.

Presently the spokesman, an Indian of no less stature than he who had caused David's perplexity, but with flatter features and less grace of carriage, ended his discourse. A moment of silence followed. Then Metipom began to speak. The sachem had a deep and resonant voice and used it eloquently. Also he used it at much length, and David felt that his body was shriveling in the heat ere the sachem ended and the throng within the gate fell back. David found himself in the front of the throng when Metipom and his counselors stalked back through the entrance, followed by the visitors, and hence was within arm's reach of the latter as they passed him. First came he who had spoken, the perspiration standing in beads upon the oiled surface of his body, his eyes straight ahead, a sort of contemptuous dignity upon him. The shorter and heavier Indian followed upon his heels, a sly-eyed, long-headed youth who saw much without seeming to turn his gaze. Behind him, lithe with the easy grace of a panther, came the third messenger. He, too, following the custom of

his people, forbore to glance to left or right, since all semblance of curiosity was considered discourteous, until, being close upon David, he for an instant only shot a look straight into the boy's eyes. As brief as it was, it said much, for eyes and nostrils dilated warningly, and David, with a gasp he could not smother, recognized beneath the painted lines and symbols the countenance of Monapikot!

CHAPTER XIV

EMISSARIES FROM KING PHILIP

A MOMENT later he was doubting his senses. The visitors had disappeared into the sachem's wigwam and the villagers had crowded in behind them or clustered about the doorway, and David was alone in the hot glare of the sun. Bewilderedly he passed the edge of the throng. From within the lodge came the murmur of a voice. Outside the crowd was talking in low tones. A perceptible atmosphere of excitement had pervaded the village. But David, seeking his own wigwam, gave little thought to that. If the Indian was, indeed, Pikot, why was he there, an emissary of the murderous King Philip? Had it come to pass, as Obid had long predicted, that Eliot's Indians had forgot their teachings and returned to savagery? David could believe it of some, but never of Pikot! Besides, the look his friend had given him had said, "Caution!" If Pikot had really joined with Philip, he would have cared little whether David recognized him. What the

look had conveyed to the boy was: "I am Pikot, your friend, but you must not know me. Whatever happens, we are strangers. Trust me!" David drew a deep breath and felt a lightening of the heart. Whatever Pikot's secret might be, it was not a shameful one, he decided, and he would trust him. Indeed, it might well be that Straight Arrow was but playing a part in order to rescue his old friend. Perchance he had been dispatched hither by the Council at Boston. And yet, in spite of his resolve to be trustful, David revolted at the recollection of Pikot oiled and painted and bedecked for the warpath and serving as a messenger for that outlaw, Philip of Mount Hope.

Then a new thought came to him. Was it not possible that the embassy from Philip was but a pretense, a means of entering the Wachoosett village as friends? Maybe not only Pikot, but the two Indians with him, were there for no other purpose than to rescue him, David, from Metipom. And yet the boy's knowledge of the Indians told him beyond doubt that neither of Pikot's companions was Nipmuck, but, unless he was much mistaken, of King Philip's own tribe.

His further ponderings were interrupted

by a darkening of the entrance, and John entered.

"You come," he said. "Great Sachem say it."

Wondering, David followed John to the big wigwam. Shouldering his way through the throng without, John led David through the door and into the softer twilight of the lodge. Within was an unusual scene. Every available foot of space was occupied save in the very center, where, surrounded by all his counselors, the sachem sat with the three messengers from King Philip before him. Around this group, packed like fish in a hogshead, were the men of the village, or so many of them as were fortunate enough to enter. The sachem's big green stone pipe had been smoked by the visitors and the chief and was now passing from hand to hand amongst the counselors. There was little talk going on, although occasionally Metipom addressed a question or a word to the guests and was briefly answered. David's advent excited no attention, and, at a sign from John, he squatted at the edge of the circle. Through the smoke-hole above, the sun sent a long wand of golden radiance into the wigwam in which the blue haze of tobacco smoke

wreathed and eddied. The place was intolerably hot and close. As he took his seat, David glanced surreptitiously at Monapikot. The Pegan was silent and straight and motionless, and if he knew of David's entrance he made no sign. Between the guests and the sachem, on the rush mats there, lay the bundle they had brought. For some reason David's eyes returned to it again and again in a fascination he could not have explained. After that first glance he avoided looking at Pikot lest sharp eyes should read his thoughts. At a little distance, through the smoke haze, he saw Sequanawah, and, in the background, the ancient Quinnapasso, the latter apparently taking advantage of the ceremonial silence to snatch a few winks of sleep. David, wondering for what reason he had been summoned, waited seemingly unperturbed, but secretly much concerned.

At last the peace pipe completed its journey and was returned to the sachem, who laid it carefully on the floor at his feet. Then he pointed to the spokesman of the embassy. "You talk," he said.

Obediently the Indian arose, cast a slow look about the wigwam, and then, facing the sachem, spoke. Much of what he said was

well beyond David's understanding, for not only did he speak the native language, but he used many words having no place in the Nipmuck tongue. Nevertheless, the boy comprehended the tenor of what he said.

The spokesman's name was Wissataumkin, and he proclaimed himself a Narragansett and one who stood close to his sachem, Quananchett, son of Miantunnomoh. With him, he said, were Tamanso, son of Nowapowett, and nephew of King Philip, and Wompatannawa, a Niantic captain. At the latter name he indicated Monapikot. The Great Sachem, King Philip, had sent them to tell his brothers, the Wachoosett people, how went his war against the English and for what reasons that war was being waged. Thereupon Wissataumkin told of Philip's grievances against the colonists, and a very strong case indeed did he make. He accused the English of disregarding written treaties and of violating spoken promises. He referred to the execution of Poggapanossoo, otherwise Tobias, Philip's counselor, and two others for the killing of John Sassamon. He said that since Philip had made war the English had preyed on women and children, arresting all they could lay hands on and

taking them into captivity: and that unless their hand was stayed they would send them across the great water as slaves. Then he told of battles fought; of how Philip had met with and defeated many Englishmen at Pocasset, of the battle in the swamp beside the Taunton River where countless of the enemy had been slain, of his attack on Mendon and the ambush at Quaboag. According to the narrator, King Philip had been everywhere victorious and the English were in terror and in all places falling back on their forts. Before the leaves were off the trees, declared Wissataumkin, not one white man would be left. The Narragansetts and the Nipmucks to the south had joined with the Great Sachem Philip. Woosonametipom and his people were also Nipmucks, and now Philip bade them choose whether they would fight with him or against him. Soon the war would come to their country, and those who were not with Philip would be considered against him. What word should he carry back to his chief?

When Wissataumkin had ceased, Metipom, who had listened gravely and in silence, spoke. "What you say may be true, O Wissataumkin, but we have heard other tales.

We have heard that the English have killed many of Philip's warriors and taken many prisoners. We care little for the English, although we have long remained at peace with them. Nor is Philip's quarrel our quarrel unless we make it so. We go not to war at any man's ordering. Yet it seems that our people have been patient under many wrongs inflicted by these white-faces and it may be that, as you have said, the time has come to drive them forth from our fields and forests, that peace and prosperity may return once more to us. I, too, have suffered wrong, for these same English did seize my son, Nausauwah, for no cause and do now hold him prisoner in their town of Boston. And yet to take up Philip's quarrel may not be wise, for the English fight with guns and we have but few, and against powder and lead the arrow is weak. I would take counsel, my brothers. By sunset you shall have my answer. Until then my house is yours, and all that is mine is for you to partake of."

"I hear, O Sachem," answered Wissataumkin. "May your council be wise. As to that Philip's warriors have been killed and made prisoners, why, that is but an English lie. None dare stand but a moment's

time against him. In battle his enemies fall before him like rushes before the knife. His wigwams are decked with the heads of the foes. For token, O Woosonametipom, he sends you these gifts."

He gestured to Tamanso and the latter drew his knife from his belt and cut the lashings about the bundle that lay before him. Slowly, dramatically, he unrolled the rush matting while all within the wigwam craned their heads to see. And then, gruesome and horrid, there lay to the gaze two dried and withered human heads.

CHAPTER XV

THE SACHEM DECIDES

A SIBILANT sound, the indrawing of many breaths, passed about the wigwam. David, after a first horrified look at the awful trophies, closed his eyes against the sight, faint and sick. For an instant the scene rocked and swayed about him and he stretched forth a groping hand for support. Then the tremor passed and a great and suffocating anger swelled within him, and he opened his eyes again to see Metipom leaning forward above the heads, his countenance set in a grim and baleful smile. Wissataumkin, on his feet, looked down triumphantly. The flat-faced Tamanso had the air of a conjuror after a successful trick. Him they called Wompatannawa, alone of the three emissaries, showed no emotion. Very straight he sat, his gaze fixed levelly over the heads of the throng.

At sight of Monapikot, David's wrath overflowed and he sprang to his feet, one outstretched hand pointing accusingly at the Pegan.

"Traitor and renegade!" he cried. "This is your gratitude, then, this your return for our trust and friendship! Mayhap those be fruit of your treachery, Monapikot! Which of your benefactors have you slain? Wompatannawa you call yourself? Hear a fitter name: Murderer! You who —"

Two braves beside him, at a sign from Metipom, seized him and bore him, struggling, to the ground. His torrent of anger ceased only when a knife touched his throat, and then, trembling, hot tears in his eyes, he gave in.

"You no talk," said one of the Indians grimly.

David swallowed hard, nodded, and, after a moment, muttered, "Winnet." When he looked, the sachem was addressing Monapikot. None, it seemed, had heeded his outburst. Perhaps for the few who knew any English, save Monapikot, his words had flowed too fast to be understood. When the pounding of blood in his head would allow, he strove to hear what the Pegan was saying to Metipom, for the former had arisen to his feet and was speaking in Nipmuck.

"I know him not, Woosonametipom, nor ever saw him. Nor do I know how it happens

that an Englishman's cub is present at this conference. Where I come from, Great Sachem, we do not invite the enemy to our councils."

There was a murmur about the wigwam, and Metipom scowled. "Since when, O Wompatannawa, have the Niantic people, who no longer make laws of their own, but follow the mandates of the Narragansetts as a dog follows its master, begun to teach wisdom to others?" he asked haughtily.

"The dog that is faithful bites its master's enemies, O Sachem," replied the Pegan meaningly.

"And the dog who knows no master minds his own affairs," said Metipom. "My people eat from no one's hand, O Young Man Wise Beyond Your Years. Nor do they come or go at any's bidding. The Wachoosetts owe no allegiance to Philip. Nor do they bite without cause. If there be cause now we shall see." He turned to Wissataumkin. "Food shall be prepared for you. May it do you much good. At sunset you shall have my answer."

The emissaries from Philip arose and went out and all save the counselors followed. David, too, would have departed, but the

sachem ordered him stayed, and presently the powwow was making talk with him.

"Great Sachem say what for you speak Niantic man?" he asked. "You know um maybe?"

David hesitated. Then: "I do not know him. Anger caused me to speak."

"What for you angry with him, David?"

David pointed at the withered heads at his feet. "Those, O Wise Powwow, are the heads of my people. This man Wompatannawa is my enemy. Does not one feel anger at his enemy?"

The medicine man translated the reply to the sachem, and the latter grunted. Then:

"These men say King Philip makes war on the English and everywhere defeats um. Say they run away like foxes before dogs. What you think?"

"I think they lie. Say to the Great Sachem that the English do not run from their enemies. They stand and fight. If they are killed, they are killed. But they do not retreat. Therefore the tale these men have told is false to that extent. And if they lie of one thing, why not of all? Before I was brought here the Nipmucks and the Narragansetts had given their word to the English

to remain their friends." David hoped that this was true, but did not know it. "It may be that a few have dishonored that promise, but a few only. Say to the Great Sachem that there can be but one outcome of a war between the English and the Indians, and that when, as it will be, the English are victorious, then much trouble will come for all who have shown themselves their enemies. The English have many guns that shoot farther than an arrow can fly, and many horses wherewith they can outdistance the fleetest runner. They are many and the Indians few. If the Wachoosetts take arms against them, many years of sorrow will follow."

During David's words Metipom kept his eyes on the boy's face as though seeking to read what thoughts lay behind it. And when the powwow had again translated, the sachem was silent a moment, his gaze on the ghastly tokens before him. Finally he raised his eyes to David and pointed at the heads.

"What of those?" he asked in his own tongue.

"I have not said, O Sachem, that none of my countrymen have been killed. Doubtless a few have fallen and a few are prisoners. But said these messengers from Philip how

many Indians have been killed? My hand has two sides, and so has every tale."

Metipom thrust his lower lip forth, shot a calculating glance at David and nodded. So, too, did some of the counselors: and one spoke. It was the aged Quinnapasso.

"The White Boy talks wise talk," he quavered. "If Philip conquers, why does he seek our help, Woosonametipom?"

At that many grunted and several spoke together until the sachem bade them be silent. "Tell him to be gone," he said, pointing at David. "Tell him we will weigh what he has said."

Outside, David drew a long breath of relief, thankful to be away from the mournful sight of Philip's tokens. As he sought his wigwam, he strove to solve the puzzling mystery of Monapikot's apparent defection. Now that his spasm of anger had passed, something of his former belief in his friend returned. After all, the heads proved nothing one way or another. And although Pikot's words to Metipom had seemed to encourage the sachem to take sides with Philip, yet it might be that they had been meant to have the other effect, to arouse in him a spirit of obstinacy. Metipom was proud and self-

willed, and might well resent dictation. And Pikot's bearing had warmed David's old affection as, straight and dignified and proudly contemptuous, he had dared the sachem's anger. In the wigwam David threw himself on his bed of skins and, with his hands beneath his head, gazed at the hot, sun-smitten roof above him and tried to find an answer to the riddle. After a while the old squaw pattered in and would have made a fire, but David, far from hungry, drove her forth, chattering, into the sunlight.

The heat put him to sleep at last, and when he awoke an hour or more later John was squatting beside him, his pipe between his lips. David lay a minute and watched the Indian's face and wondered what thoughts were passing behind that mask-like countenance. Presently, sighing for weariness of the heat, David drew the Indian's regard, and the latter turned his grave eyes toward the boy.

"Much hot," he grunted.

"Aye, John. Have Philip's messengers departed yet?"

The Indian shook his head and pointed his pipe-stem toward the sky. "Sun um high. No go so. Bimeby."

"But — what time of the day is it?" asked David perplexedly. "I thought — " His gaze encountered the glare outside the entrance and he remembered and groaned. "'Tis yet but early afternoon," he said. "Hast heard what decision Metipom and his council will reach?"

John could not comprehend that and David turned it into his halting Nipmuck.

Then: "Nay," answered John, "they still talk. Their voices sound like the cawing of many crows in the spring. The young men say one thing and the old men another, and the Great Sachem sits and smokes his pipe and listens."

"What say the young men, brother?"

John cast a quick glance from the corners of his half-shut eyes and his lips drew back at their corners in a snarling grin. "War!" he answered.

"Against the English?" David laughed shortly. "'Tis evident that their choice is also yours, O Blind One."

John muttered words that the other could not catch. Then: "I am not so blind but that I can see my enemy," he answered, frowning.

"The fox who fled from the sound ran into

the trap. What you think is an enemy is but a noise made by King Philip."

"He is a great warrior and a sachem of much wisdom."

"A great warrior he may be," said David, "but his wisdom is that of a gnat."

John scowled and muttered.

"Philip has followed the advice of a few malcontents, and now, having declared war and finding his mistake, he seeks help of the great Metipom. The fox who fell into the pitfall called on the bear to help him. So the bear jumped into the hole and the fox climbed out on his back. Whereupon the bear called to him and asked: 'And in what manner do I escape, Master Fox?' And the fox answered: 'Why, that Brother Bear, is a thing concerns me not. I bid you good-day!'"

"You speak for your people," grumbled John. "I speak for mine. When the wind blows two ways there is only dust."

"Until one wind becomes the stronger, O Brother. Then the dust vanishes and wise counsel prevails."

The Wachoosett grunted. "My brother has many words," he replied dryly, and relapsed into silence.

Presently the heat became intolerable within the wigwam, and David fared forth. About one of the lodges near the center of the village many men were gathered, and amongst them David saw, as he drew near, Pikot and his two companions. They sat a little apart, each smoking gravely, and taking no part in the talk that was going on. Most of those in the gathering were younger men, although here and there one beyond fighting age hearkened to the discussion. David paused a little from the edge of the throng and sought to catch Pikot's eye, but while the Pegan must have been aware of his presence he never so much as glanced the boy's way, and after a moment, since the Indians began to regard him with disfavor, he went on.

From within the big wigwam of the sachem came the sound of a voice, quavering, monotonous, and David recognized it for the voice of Quinnapasso. As the boy passed beyond, the voice died away and in its place came the deeper speech of another.

David found a place of shade near the gate of the palisade and stretched himself down, and after a moment one of the yellow village dogs crept toward him, wagging an

ingratiating tail, and the boy for loneliness called the sorry creature to him and patted him, at which the dog, surprised as delighted with such uncommon kindness, licked his hand and curled up against his body.

Slowly the sun neared the western slope of the hill and the heat diminished, and David thought of food. The council yet continued and the gathering near by was larger than before, with many squaws standing about the fringe. Finding John, David made known his desire for food, and then seated himself in the shade of the lodge to await the arrival of the old crone. And while he sat there there came a stirring in the village and a youth shouted shrilly, and the cry was taken up by others. Then an Indian drum began to sound, and David, having arisen to look, saw a dozen or more of the younger men stepping about in a wide circle in ridiculous postures while the older men stood by applauding with shouts and gestures. But the women had hurried to their houses, and now David saw them dragging their goods outside the doors. The drum went on monotonously and the boys, prancing and chanting in high voices, formed in line and went weaving in and out between the

wigwams. David did not need the triumph in John's face to tell him what decision the sachem and his counselors had arrived at. The Indian came striding toward him swiftly, his eyes sparkling.

"The Great Sachem has spoken," he announced proudly. "We make war on your people, O White Brother."

David nodded indifferently. Then: "I am sorry," he said. "The Fox has had his way."

When John had gone again and the old squaw was busied over David's meal, Sequanawah came. Silently he seated himself near by and dropped tobacco into his pipe. When it was lighted and drawing he asked soberly: "My brother has heard?"

"Aye, Sequanawah."

The Indian smoked for a long moment. At last: "Battle is good," he went on. "Peace, too, is good. I do not know."

"I wish your sachem had decided otherwise," said David sadly. "The English are too strong, Sequanawah, and when the war is past your tribe will suffer with the rest. I am sorry."

Sequanawah bowed. "My brother speaks what he believes is truth. He may be right.

The medicine men say not so. Their omens foretell great victories, David."

"That we shall see, O Sequanawah. But I grieve that this thing must come between my brother and me."

The Wachoosett bowed again and looked troubled. "Sequanawah sorrows, too, O David. His heart is sad." He emptied his pipe and arose. "Farewell, brother."

"So soon, Sequanawah? You take the trail to-night?"

"I know not at what hour, but ere morning I shall be gone. Farewell."

Sequanawah turned and departed against the lingering glow of the sunset and passed from David's sight. The old squaw grumbled that his food was ready and he bade her bring it forth to him there. While he ate, the preparations for leaving went forward busily, and presently, as twilight came, a great fire flared before the sachem's lodge and more drums beat, and painted braves, feathered and grotesque in the dancing light of the flames, circled and howled and groaned and shook their spears to the purpling, star-pricked sky.

CHAPTER XVI

MONAPIKOT'S MESSAGE

FAR into the night the war-dance continued. As men tired and dropped from the circle that revolved about the leaping fire, others took their places. Squaws, seated together near at hand, cried their warriors on to fresh exertions. Old men nodded and watched and grunted approval, their rheumy eyes brightening again with memories. Medicine men, wearing their choicest ornaments, hideously besmeared from forehead to ankle, capered and chanted like evil things seen in a dream. And beneath the songs and wild cries, the steady, unvarying *tum-tum-tum* of the drums sounded as sounds the beat of the waves under the tumult of the tempest.

David watched from afar. He had no taste for such ceremonies, nor any sympathy. He had grown to appreciate many attributes of the Indians; their bravery and hardihood, their honesty in their dealings with each other, their faithfulness in friendship; but this childish orgy by which they lashed themselves to a frenzy of bloodthirstiness, this

recitation of boastful legends and vain threatenings, left him cold. To the Anglo-Saxon mind there was something akin to lunacy in such doings.

David wondered if Monapikot and his two unpleasing companions had left on their homeward journey. It seemed likely, although once, near the middle of the evening, he had thought that he had glimpsed the tall, straight form of the Pegan against the firelight. That Pikot should go without a few words of speech with him seemed strange. It would not have been impossible for the Indian to have spoken briefly under some pretext, and David felt resentful and sad because he had not done so. To-night it became easy once more to believe that his old friend had indeed turned traitor.

John had deserted his charge utterly and was prancing and bending and howling about the fire. Sequanawah had vanished, but whether he had left the village David did not know. Thoughts of escape came to him and he weighed the chances of success. Many times he had wondered whether by scaling the palisade wall he could evade the watchfulness of the sentries. Reaching the top of the wall would be no easy feat, for

the smooth, peeled logs that formed it were a good twelve feet in height. Yet he had observed places where, he thought, he might take advantage of crevice and protrusion with hands and feet and so win the summit. Beyond the palisade lay a dry ditch of no great consequence. It would but increase his drop by another two or three feet. Surmounting the wall was, he believed, possible under favoring circumstances such as at present pertained, but the question was what would happen afterwards. He had learned long since that by night the village was well guarded. And he knew, too, that Metipom had ordained his death if captured outside the palisade. To-night it might be that, with every man of fighting age apparently taking part in the dance, the sentries had been withdrawn, but it would not do to count too much on that. On the other hand, the decision for war might well have caused them to increase their vigilance. In any case, David decided, action was best delayed until the village had quieted for the night and the exhausted Indians slept. A new moon hung in the western sky, giving a faint radiance where the ruddy light of the flames failed. In two hours, maybe, or three at the most,

the moon would be below the elbow of the mountain and his chance of getting away unseen would be better.

After a while he lay down where he was, against the side of the wigwam, resolved to snatch what sleep he might before the time for action came, if come it should. For a time he lay and watched the silver stars and strove to close his ears to the throbbing of the drums and the howling of the Indians. Gradually sleep settled over his tired body and his breathing grew deep and slow. An hour of the hot, breathless night passed. Occasionally the sleeper stirred or moaned, but he did not wake. And so it was that he did not hear the faint, stealthy movements that might have attracted his attention had he been awake. From behind the wigwam they came, sounds like the soft squirming of a serpent across the tufts of sun-parched grass and through the low patches of briars, sounds no louder than a weasel might have made, and that, subdued by the noise of the drums and the dancers, might well have escaped any save the keenest ears. Behind the wigwam, away from the dancing, flickering light of the fire, the darkness was not black, but yet was deep enough to render uncertain

the shadow that lay upon the ground there and moved slowly nearer and nearer. Then, presently, the moving shadow merged with that of the lodge and the faint sounds ceased.

David came slowly awake, floating to consciousness across the margin of sleep as a swimmer floats to shore. Something had summoned him, but he knew not what. Above the stars still twinkled in a sky that was like a close-hanging curtain of warm purple-black velvet. The slender moon had halved the distance to the dark fringe of forest and crags that marked the edge of the mountain. But the uncanny beat of the drums and thud of feet and howling of voices still went on. David blinked and yawned, vaguely disturbed, and then listened acutely. From the half-darkness came a sibilant voice:

"*David!*"

With a quick leap of his pulse the boy answered:

"I am here! Who speaks my name?"

"Monapikot."

"Monapikot!" There was no disguising the gladness he felt.

"Aye, Noawama. Speak softly. Are you outside?"

"Aye, Straight Arrow. And you? I do not see you."

"I, too. Go inside the wigwam and lie close to the wall at its back and farthest from the fire. I have many things to say and there is little time."

David obeyed. At the nearer lodge an elderly squaw sat motionless by the doorway, a child slumbering against her knees. None others were near. Placing himself so that his lips were close to the rancid-smelling skins of the wigwam, David said: "I am here, Pikot."

"Good," replied the other softly. "Listen well, David. When the moon is behind the hill we start our journey back to the southward, and ere that much must be said. You did well to seem not to know me when I came, but what happened after was child's foolishness, David, and might have cost me my life."

"I am sorry," said David humbly. "And yet, my friend, I scarce knew what to think. Nor do I yet." He paused, seeking to ask a question and yet at a loss for words to clothe it in. At last: "Is — is all well?" he faltered.

"Aye. I bring you greetings from your

father. In this way matters stand, David. The Wachoosett sachem demands the release of his son as the price of your return, but so skillfully has he spoken that none dare say for certain that he holds you captive. It is, he says, Manitou who will bring you back safe to your home so soon as he is pleased by the release of Nausauwah. He talked slyly of knowing your place of captivity by reason of a vision, and so well did he play the fox that your father and Master Vernham returned not knowing whether he told the truth or not."

"Then my father did come for me, Pikot?" asked David eagerly.

"Aye, with Master William Vernham and Obid, the servant, and Captain Consadine, of the Military at Newtowne."

"And an Indian, Pikot. Was it you?"

"Nay; I was to the south and knew naught of your going until later. The guide was Tanopet."

"Tanopet!"

"Aye. But we waste time that stands not still. Your father and Master Vernham and others have sought to secure the release of Nausauwah, but with no avail. Promises have been made, but naught is done. The

war against Philip engages much attention and all else, it seems, must wait. But if they do not give the Indian his freedom, neither do they bring him to trial, and until then you are safe, David."

"Safe! Then you did not come to rescue me, Pikot?"

"Not yet. Other duties lie before me, Noawama, that I cannot tell of. But keep a brave heart and a still tongue. Soon I will come again."

"My father? And Obid?"

"Well, David. Your father troubles over your prisonment and that there is naught he can yet do to end it. But now that the Wachoosetts go upon the war-path, that is changed, and fear of offending them will no longer hold him back. While Woosonametipom was still at peace with the English, the Council at Boston would not allow aught that might seem unfriendly."

"But how comes it that you are here on such a strange mission, Straight Arrow? I never thought to see you inciting our enemies against us. If you came not to seek me, I do not understand."

"Said I that I did not come seeking you, David? Nay, I but said that not yet could I

deliver you from the sachem. Larger matters come first. As for the company I keep, heed it not. Who visits the wolf must wear fur. Trust me, Noawama, as your people do."

"I do trust you, Straight Arrow. Tell me how goes the war with King Philip?"

"Well and ill. The Narragansetts have joined with him, as have a few of the Nipmucks living to the south, but the Mohegans have sent warriors to our aid led by Oneko, son of Uncas. Of late Philip was driven into a swamp beside the Taunton River and, had the English attacked with skill as well as bravery and pressed close, he would have been there and then destroyed. But, seeking to starve him out, they withdrew all but a few soldiers, and he soon found canoes and slipped away across the river and into the Nipmuck country where he daily gathers more warriors to his cause."

"It would seem that some one blundered," mused David.

"Aye," agreed Pikot grimly. "And the blunder may cost dear, for now Philip no longer has the sea at his back, but may come and go as he chooses, with the forests to lurk in. But it grows late, Noawama, and I

must be away. Keep a brave heart and put your trust in God."

"And you will come soon again, Straight Arrow?"

"Aye, but when I know not. Perchance some day when on the trail you will find me beside you. Then make no sign, but let believe that we are strangers, David."

"On the trail said you?"

"Aye, for Woosonametipom goes to join Philip and in the morning the village will be vanished."

"And I? Think you —"

"The sachem will take you with him, since he may not leave you behind. Be cautious, my brother, and guard your tongue, for now all are hot with the lust for battle and their hands are near their knives."

"I thought of seeking escape over the wall, Pikot. Once in the forest —"

"Nay, for the village is well guarded and the trail southward swarms with enemies. Try it not. Do the sachem's bidding and leave the matter of your escape to your friends. We will not fail you. Farewell, Noawama."

"Farewell, Monapikot. I pray you give my love to my father if you meet him and

tell him that all is well with me. Bid him not to trouble for me. And so to Obid. Farewell!"

When the Pegan went, David could not tell, for no sound came to him, but when, after a moment, David called softly again, there was no answer.

Comforted, and with much to think on, David stretched himself on his bed. The revelry was dying out, and so the fire, and although the village did not gain its usual quiet that night, but was ever filled with murmurings and movements, the drums ceased before long and the war-chants ended. And David, lighter of heart than in many a day, soon dropped to sleep again.

CHAPTER XVII

METIPOM TAKES THE WAR-PATH

He awoke to find John tugging at him. The wigwam was barely alight, but sounds told him that the village was well astir. The Indian had brought instructions from the sachem and the wherewithal to carry them out. David was to take the trail with them and to that end must look to be one of the tribe. First his body must be stained, and then he must put on the scanty garments that lay in a small heap beside the couch. With small enthusiasm David yielded to John's ministrations. A brown liquid from a small kettle, still warm, was rubbed over him from head to feet, and where it touched him the whiteness of his skin disappeared and a copperyred took its place. David viewed the result with misgivings.

"Shall I ever come clean again?" he asked. "Will water remove it, John?"

"Nay, it will not wash off, brother, but in time it will go." John stood back and viewed his work proudly. "None would know that

you were not of our people, David. Very brave and beautiful you look."

"Do I so?" asked the boy dryly. "Yet methinks I prefer my own skin better. However, an it pleases you and will some day disappear, I mind not. What now?"

"The sachem sends you these."

"What! That thing? Nay, I will not go about the world naked for Metipom or any one! And so you may say to him!"

But in the end, mindful of Monapikot's advice, he donned the costume provided; loin-cloth, belt, moccasins, and necklet. All were of the best and much ornamented with quills and wampum. As for the moccasins, he was glad enough to have them, for his shoes had long since worn through at sides and bottoms and provided scant protection for his feet. John grew every minute more proud of the miracle he was working and must momentarily pause to admire and praise. And when David thought all complete, and viewed his brown nakedness with a mixture of shame and interest, John produced white and blue pigments and, with the absorption of an artist before his canvas, traced meaningless lines and figures on the boy's chest and face. Then, with David

grumbling wrathfully, the Indian wove three red feathers into his hair, and, picking up the bow that Sequanawah had fashioned, put it in his hand.

"Now!" he announced. "Go and see yourself in the water of the spring, my brother, and be vain."

"More like ashamed," David grumbled. "Whither do we go, and when?"

"I know not whither, but when the women are ready for the journey we start."

David pushed aside the skin that hid the entrance and gazed forth in astonishment. The Indian village was gone save for the palisade and, here and there, a bark wigwam. Otherwise the lodges were down and the skins and mats that had formed them were rolled and tied with thongs and lay ready for transportation on the backs of the squaws. Fires still smouldered and a few families were yet partaking of food. Dogs barked excitedly and the younger children called shrilly. Everywhere was confusion and bustle.

As David watched the unusual scene, the sun, hotly red, crept over the rim of the world and in the valley eastward the blue-gray mist wavered above the parched earth.

The old squaw came with food ready cooked, and brought, too, a sack of parched corn for David's pouch. The food he devoured as he stood, and then, John having returned to his own family, he made his way to the spring, somewhat shamefacedly, and, as he scooped the water from it, saw himself reflected vaguely in the surface. The first glimpse was startling, for he who looked back from the rippled mirror might well have been a young Indian. Even the boy's features seemed to have changed; as, indeed, they had since his coming to the village, for lean living had sharpened the cheek-bones and made thinner the nose; and now it was a Wachoosett brave, painted and feathered, who was reflected back from the spring. The vision brought a little thrill to David, for there was something almost uncanny in the marvels wrought by the stain and the pigment and the few gay feathers.

An hour later the exodus had begun. A handful of braves had left the village long before, and at intervals others had followed, but the main body of the tribe began to straggle through the gate an hour after sun-up. Ahead, pretending no military or-

der, but armed and watchful, went the warriors, all painted and panoplied with bows and spears. Well in the van stalked Wooson-ametipom, a striking figure in a cloak of green cloth edged with soft yellow feathers below which his unclad legs emerged startlingly. Much wampum he wore, and his face was disfigured with a blue disk on each cheek and a figure not unlike a Maltese cross done in yellow on his forehead. Metipom carried a musket, as did several others. Next to the warriors went the older boys, armed with bows, and behind them were the men past the fighting age and the squaws, maidens and children. Only occasionally did one of the men or boys carry any burden, and then it was like to be some treasured object like an iron kettle or a bundle of pelts. It was the women and maidens, and even the children, who bore the household things: skins and mats for wigwams, cooking-utensils, food supplies, babies, and a general miscellany of belongings too precious to leave behind. Used to such form of drudgery, however, the squaws kept pace with the men and asked no favor.

David found that he was to be allowed no chance of escape, for two painted and oil-

smeared braves guarded him closely. He was permitted to retain his bow and arrows, but he had neither knife, spear, nor tomahawk. The pace set by the leaders was brisk and by mid-morning they had crossed two small streams and left some ten or a dozen miles behind them. Straight into the west they had gone, for the most part through park-like forest from which the underbrush had been fired the autumn before, following well-defined trails. Camp was made on the slope of a hill and there they rested until afternoon. Some of the scouts joined them here and made reports to the sachem. John brought food to David and afterwards fetched him water from a brook that ran at the foot of the slope.

David's skin, unaccustomed as it was to exposure, had suffered from the heat of the sun, and he was glad to seek the shade and burrow into the cool fronds of a patch of ferns. The shadows were lengthening when the journey began again. Now the way led more to the south, and close to sunset a broad valley lay before them through which a shallow river flowed. Keeping to the hills, Metipom led his warriors southward until dusk, by which time they had reached a

grassy swale between two wooded heights. Here there was a fine spring of water as well as plenty of young, straight growth suitable for lodge-poles, and here permanent camp was made. That night David slept, though not very soundly, under the stars, with his two guards close beside him.

In the morning the women began the construction of the lodges while the men prepared for their business of war. Some few of the older men and boys went in search of game and the maidens to seek berries, but for the most part the Indians toiled at erecting wigwams or adding to their store of arrows and spears. Sequanawah and another came to the new village during the morning and there followed a conclave of the sachem and his counselors. David was put to work with some of the youths at raising lodge-poles, and, since in that treeless place the sun had full way with his tender skin, he was soon in agony. At last he could stand it no longer and, amid the shrill gibes of his companions, took his suffering body to the lee of a wigwam and found some comfort in the shade. There Sequanawah later found him and, seeing the puffed condition of his back and shoulders, brought a fat and pitying

squaw who anointed his burns with a cooling salve that brought instant relief.

"I am weary," said the Indian when the squaw had gone again. "I have traveled many leagues since we parted, David, and the heat has baked my vitals. I had not thought to see my brother so soon, for it was not so said. The Great Sachem lays his plans to-day and to-morrow rubs them out with his foot."

Sequanawah drew a moccasin over the grass and shook his head.

"Where have you been, Sequanawah?" asked David.

The Indian waved a lean hand vaguely. "Into the sunset and back," he answered.

David smiled faintly. "Aye? And what saw you, brother?"

A reflection of the boy's smile flickered in the black eyes of the Indian, though he replied gravely enough. "Deer in the forest and fish in the streams."

"Were any white, my brother?"

"Nay." Sequanawah shook his head. "I sought not your people, David."

"Is Philip near by, then?"

"He comes."

"Hither?"

"I know not. Stay you close to the wigwams, David, and ask no questions."

"That is no easy task, Sequanawah, when my people perish."

"Many will be left, brother. Philip cannot win this war, for the White-Faces are too many against him. In the end he must hide or yield. Yet ere that comes about the forest leaves will be red with blood and many of your people and mine will seek the Great Spirit. I go now to have sleep, my brother."

In spite of Monapikot's advice, David was resolved to let no opportunity to escape his captors be wasted, for by keeping his ears open he had learned that English settlements lay near by, notably that of Brookfield, which, he believed, was little more than twelve miles south of the present encampment. Yet, although his guards that night relaxed their vigilance, so well was the village picketed that any attempt at escape would have been futile. The next morning strange Indians came, mean and povern-seeming savages to the number of eight. These, he learned, were from the small tribe of Quaboags, dwelling beyond Brookfield. They spent more than an hour in Metipom's wigwam and then departed southward. Of

the number more than half bore muskets of ancient pattern. With them went Sequanawah and two other captains.

During the day several parties of from six to a dozen or more warriors left the village in different directions, and at intervals scouts returned and made report to the sachem.

Woosonametipom was now living in less state, his lodge being small and unadorned. Most of the time he sat in front of it, smoking or dozing when no affairs demanded attention. It was evident to David that the present village, while designed to be occupied for some time, was not intended to be permanent. This was shown by the makeshift manner of erecting the lodges and by the fact that the squaws had not unpacked certain of their bundles brought from the Wachoosett country. Probably, he thought, it was Metipom's intention to join Philip and follow that sagamore's wanderings. The site had doubtless been chosen with a view to secretness and safety from sudden surprise. The place was like a pocket, with the opening toward the wooded valley that ran north and south. On three sides of the pocket the hills arose sufficiently to hide it, and, being

but sparsely timbered, afforded a far view of the country about. By day and night watchers, stationed on the heights and at the entrance of the grassy pocket, formed a complete cordon about the encampment. Attack, should it come, would naturally come from the valley, and in that case it would be simple enough for the Wachoosetts, should they choose flight rather than battle, to slip back across the hill toward the east.

Toward sunset of the second day in the new village, David went down the slope toward where the spring burbled from beneath the twisted roots of a great ash tree. His sunburn still pained him and many small blisters had come on his shoulders. Three squaws were filling kettles at the spring, and to one of them he made known his desire for laving his body. When she at last understood what it was he wished, the woman took much delight in filling her kettle and emptying it over his shoulders, a service soon entered into by the other squaws, who, whatever their opinion of such procedure might have been, gained much amusement thereby and plied their kettles so diligently that the boy was soon choking and sputtering, to the entertainment of a near-by picket.

David at length had to flee or be drowned, and so he fled, laughing, around the tree and into the thicket that lay beyond, pursued by the youngest of the three women who, finding her quarry escaping, sent the contents of her kettle after him and gave up the chase. Shivering a little, for the evening was cooling with the descent of the sun, David paused to make certain that the squaws had withdrawn. Although he could not see them through the leaves, he heard their guttural laughter diminish as they plodded off up the gentle slope toward the lodges, and was on the point of emerging from his sanctuary and following when a sudden thought bade him pause.

Unintentionally he had passed between the watchers and so far none had challenged. It might be that by remaining where he was until darkness he could get away unseen. In the meanwhile if any sought him he could pretend slumber or illness as his reason for not returning. Crouching, he peered between the lower branches of the bushes. At one side, some twenty yards away, the picket who had watched the proceedings at the spring had turned and was again squatting motionless and staring into the forest. On the other side the next picket was not visible, but David

knew that he was stationed on the first rise of the little hill that began at the thicket's edge. It seemed that the first of the two had already forgotten David's existence. Perhaps he was under the belief that the captive had returned with the squaws. In any case, it appeared to David that the Indian was no more concerned with him and that he did not suspect his presence in the thicket.

With a little thrill of excitement the boy lowered himself quietly to the ground, brushing aside all twigs that might break and give alarm. He forgot to be chilly, forgot even the smarting and burning and itching of his back and shoulders, for the prospect of making his escape filled him with an exultation that warmed his heart and filled his thoughts.

Quickly the twilight came, for the forest soon shut off the last rays of the sinking sun. From the wigwams came the murmur of voices, the snarling of dogs, the crackling of evening fires. A breath of wind crept down the hillside and rustled the leaves about him. It brought the fragrance of burning wood and of cooking food and reminded him that he was hungry. But hunger was such a small matter now that he only smiled grimly and strove to be patient while the dusk changed

lingeringly to darkness. At last his hand held before his nose was but a faint gray oblong and, fearing that if he tarried longer those whose duty it was to guard him would discover his absence and give the alarm, he decided to begin his attempt.

Before darkness had fallen, he had studied the ground about him and chosen a path. Now he set out to follow it. Prone on the ground, he squirmed forward, thrusting aside the slender trunks of the bushes with cautious hands and freeing his path of twigs and fallen branches. In spite of his efforts, absolute silence was impossible, and more than once his heart leaped into his mouth as a tiny *snap* was heard or a bush, released too quickly, rustled back into place. But though the sounds seemed alarmingly loud to him, they were doubtless no more than the natural noises of the night to the picket. Inch by inch and foot by foot David made his way through the thicket, leaving the village each moment farther behind. At last the bushes ended, or rather thinned, and the trunks of trees were about him. With a breath of relief he carefully got to his feet and, still testing every step, made his way noiselessly toward the south, guiding himself by fre-

quent glimpses of a great white star that hung in the sky above the tree-tops. When a quarter of an hour had passed in cautious progress, he told himself that at last he had succeeded in making his escape, and that, unless he was so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of a scouting party by daylight, he should be within sight of an English settlement.

CHAPTER XVIII

IN KING PHILIP'S POWER

The eastern sky paled beyond the green-clad hills. A bird high on the topmost branch of a great oak tree chirped experimentally and then burst into a trilling welcome to the new day. A flush of rose crept above the horizon and cast its fairy radiance through the cloistered forest. To the weary boy who leaned against the smooth, cool bole of a beech tree the coming of dawn was grateful, indeed. All through the night he had traversed the woods, resting at times for short periods, silently, cautiously, guiding his steps by the stars. Progress had been woefully slow, and now that day was approaching he had scant knowledge of the distance he had traveled. He had heard an Indian say that the English town of Brookfield was a "little journey" to the south of the Wachoosett encampment. A "little journey" meant usually from ten to a dozen English miles, although the Indians were grandly vague in such matters. It seemed to David as he

paused to rest that he must surely have traveled that distance, and now he searched the forest for indications of cleared country. Near at hand a half-dry little stream wandered between ledges and fern banks, and David sought it and drank deeply and laved face and hands in the cool water. Then, refreshed, he turned his steps away from the dawn and set out to find the settlement.

Presently a well-defined path lay before him, proceeding in the general direction of the course he had chosen. The path was wide and hard-trodden and tempted him sorely. By taking it he could make much better progress, but there was always the possibility of an unwelcome meeting on the trail. Still, not once since he had slipped away from the Wachoosett village had he so much as heard a footstep, and it seemed quite probable to him that he was now close to Brookfield and that enemy savages would not be found so near to the settlement. So, after a moment's deliberation, he stepped forth into the path and went on quickly, though keeping a sharp watch the while. The trail turned and wound frequently and he kept close at one side or the other that he might step back from sight if needs be. A dog barked afar off and was

answered. The light increased steadily, and suddenly and like a miracle the forest became filled with the golden radiance of the sun. Only the upper reaches of the trees were illumined as yet and down below the blue shadows still lingered, but the sight brought joy and new courage to the traveler. And then, silently skirting a bend in the path, his heart stood still for an instant ere it began a wild tattoo against his ribs. Not ten paces before him stood two savages, short, stocky men in full war paraphernalia, painted and feathered. Retreat would have been futile, for they had seen him as soon as he had seen them. Remained only to put a good face on the encounter and win by. A second look showed David that, whatever the Indians were, they were not Wachoosetts. Nor did it seem that they were natives of the country thereabouts. Their tomahawks were long-hilted and heavy of head and their girdles hung lower in front. And yet they might be Quaboags, in which case he had nothing to fear, since so far the Quaboags still professed friendship for the English.

His pause had been but momentary, and now he went forward, one hand outspread in the Nipmuck salutation. "Netop!" he

called. The strangers made no answer for a moment, but looked him up and down with sidelong glances. Then one replied in a language the boy did not know. But the words were plainly a question, and David, resolving to pass himself off for what he seemed, a Wachoosett, answered in the Nipmuck tongue.

"I am a Wachoosett," he said. "Woosonametipom is my sachem. We lodge three leagues northward. We come on a friendly visit to this country. Who are you, brothers?"

The Indians seemed to understand something of what he said. Doubtless the words Wachoosett and Woosonametipom were familiar: perhaps others, since many words were similar in the different tongues. One of the two, a cruel-visaged savage with much tattooing on his body, grunted doubtfully, but the other embarked on a long speech, none of which David could fathom. But he listened gravely and respectfully, paused at one side of the path, until the man had ended. Then he replied with all the compliments and friendly phrases he could muster in Nipmuck; and wished all the time that he had at least a knife or spear. It was the cruel-

faced one who solved the difficulty of intercourse by lapsing into what passed for English with him.

"No talk um talk. Where um go?"

"I go Brookfield. Which way um, brother?"

"What for um go Brookfield?"

"I take message to English from my sachem."

"Where um message?" The savage held out a hand imperiously.

David shook his head and pointed to his forehead. "In here," he replied. Then he pointed down the path. "Brookfield this way?" he asked.

The other bowed, but shot a suspicious and scowling look from under his brows. David took a long breath and stepped forward.

"Farewell, brothers."

Mutters were their only response. David swung on, a prickly sensation along his spine. That he had fooled them into thinking him a Wachoosett Indian scarcely seemed possible. Indeed, the uglier of the two had plainly been incredulous from the first. But, after a dozen paces, he began to hope, and he was congratulating himself when there was a

swift *whiz-zt* beside him and an arrow embedded itself in a sapling a few yards ahead of him. He turned swiftly and plunged into the wood. As he dropped to cover, he was conscious of a stinging pain in his left shoulder, and looking he beheld an arrow thrust into the soft part of his upper arm. Fortunately, it had no more than buried its head, and he wrenched it loose and, sinking behind a tree, held it clutched in his right hand as he peered cautiously forth. It was not much of a weapon, to be sure, but it gave him some comfort to feel even so poor a defense in his grasp. The Indians were coming toward his hiding-place at a slow trot, with many pauses. One had fitted another arrow to his bow, but the second held only his tomahawk as he advanced. Flight, as hopeless as it seemed, was David's only course, and in an instant he was up and away, dashing from tree to tree. An arrow flew past him; footsteps sounded above the thumping of his heart. A good runner, David's night-long journey had left him with little strength for the present task, and after a minute he saw that capture was certain, for already the swifter of the two pursuers was close behind him and he knew without looking that the

THERE WAS A SWIFT *whiz-zt* BESIDE HIM AND AN ARROW EMBEDDED ITSELF IN A SAPLING

stone tomahawk was raised in air. With his back to a big tree he stopped and faced them and gestured surrender.

They, too, stopped while still a few paces away, drawing apart that he might not slip past. The ugly one grinned wickedly and swung his tomahawk with ferocious menace.

"Why um Englishman run?" he asked.

"Why did you shoot at me?" demanded David sternly.

The other savage replied. "Um say um Wachoosett. What for tell um lie, brother?"

"I am Englishman, aye, but I come from Woosonametipom's lodge. I am friend of Wachoosett, friend of Indians. I not know if you be my friend. So I say I'm Wachoosett. You see I no have weapon."

"You come along me," growled the cruel-faced Indian. "No run away. Me kill."

"Where I go?" asked David.

"You no ask um question. You come along grand."

The savage pointed back along the trail with his big tomahawk. After an instant's indecision, David went. They put him ahead and followed close behind him. In such manner the three traversed a hundred rods of the trail. Then a hand on the boy's arm

swung him to the right and he discerned a faintly visible path, scarcely more than a deer runway, that led toward the east. For a good half-hour he traveled, now turning right and now left, and at last the woods thinned and a rocky hillside meadow came into sight. Along the border of this they passed and crossed a muddy stream, and, with the morning sunlight full in their faces, mounted a bushy ridge and went down the other side of it and into a tract of marshy ground grown head-high with yellowing rushes and interspersed with alder and white birch. A dog barked suddenly from close at hand, so unexpectedly that David, picking his steps across the swamp, started and went floundering to his knees in the slimy water. In another instant the rushes were gone, trampled flat by many feet, and a little island sprang from the marsh, and David saw many Indians and some rude huts of branches and bark before him. A mangy dog rushed at his legs and ran off howling as one of the boy's captors struck him with his bow. The sunlit air was filled with the smoke of fires, voices growled, and David was thrust into the midst of a group of painted savages.

More curious than unfriendly they seemed,

but that was due to the fact that for a moment they failed to penetrate his disguise. It was not until his captors spoke, explaining and pointing, that the Indians began to murmur and growl and even laugh derisively. One seized David's scalp-lock and gave it a mighty tug as if expecting it to come off like a wig, and David, resenting the pain, thoughtlessly struck his arm away. The Indian, a tall, bone-faced brave, uttered a cry and thrust forward with the spear held in his other hand. But David saw in time and leaped back, crowding against the throng behind him, and one of his captors interposed and the crowd laughed a little. At this moment David was aware of one who was pushing his way toward him with no gentle use of his elbows, a large and heavily built Indian who wore a coat that was covered entirely with wampum of many hues arranged not unpleasingly in strange designs. Authority became him well, for, although there was something sinister in the cold glitter of his eyes, his features were not unpleasing and held a certain nobility, and David, observing all fell back in deference, and seeing that wampum coat whose fame was widespread, knew that he was face to face with the arch-

enemy, King Philip, sachem of the Wampanoags.

Pushing aside one of David's captors, who had interposed between the boy and the Indian with the spear, King Philip looked for a moment at the prisoner with straight and piercing gaze. Then, in a pleasant voice and with friendly mien, he asked: "You English?"

"Aye."

"What is your name?"

"David Lindall."

"Where you dwell, David?"

"Near the long rapids of the Charles River, westward of Nonantum."

"You know Great Teacher Eliot, maybe, by place called Natick?"

"Aye, his village of the Praying Indians is but two leagues from my father's house."

"He is fine man," said Pometacom gravely. "Come to my lodge, David, and make talk."

The wigwam of the sachem was a small and poorly built affair of bark over poles. There were a few pieces of rush matting on the floor and a few cooking-utensils beside the still warm ashes of the fire. David saw that there were neither women nor children

about, while he estimated the number of Pometacom's warriors at near sixty, a number much smaller than he would have surmised. With the chief went a young and strikingly intelligent appearing Indian, named Caleb, who was even more gaudily bedecked than the sachem himself, save for the latter's famous wampum coat. All seated themselves, and then, having lighted his pipe with much care and deliberation, King Philip, still speaking in a gentle fashion, questioned David closely. The latter, determining to tell a truthful story, told of his adventures from the time of his capture by Sequanawah, and the sachem heard him silently, nodding now and then, puffing occasional volumes of choking smoke from his stone pipe. The second Indian listened as closely, but there was an expression on his face that David did not like. When he had ended his narrative, the sachem, to David's intense surprise, asked abruptly:

"You know Captain Hutchinson?"

"Hutchinson? Nay, I know him not, King Philip."

"You come from Brookfield?"

"Nay, I was seeking Brookfield when your warriors fell upon me, as I have told."

"You tell lies!" The sachem's voice deepened to an angry growl. "You English spy. You make show you Wachoosett. You put red juice on your body and feather in your hair. You say you go with message from Woosonametipom Sachem to English at Brookfield village. You tell so to my warriors when they find you in forest. You not make fool of Philip! You tell me truth, David!"

"I have told you the truth, King Philip. If you doubt me, you need but send a messenger to Woosonametipom. He will tell you that I speak truth."

The sachem wagged his head from side to side and motioned fretfully with the hand that held his pipe. "I not believe. You spy. Maybe I kill you, maybe I not. You answer me truth what I ask; we see. How many fighting men this Captain Hutchinson have?"

"I do not know."

The sachem rewarded him with a sidelong, drooping glance that sent a chill down the boy's spine and spoke with the younger Indian in native language. Then for several minutes King Philip spat questions at David, seeking, it appeared, to learn what forces

of the English were in that vicinity, and likewise the identity of certain Indians who, it seemed, were serving with the English as guides. But to not one question could David make intelligent answer, and the sachem grew each moment more incensed, until, in the end, he tossed his pipe on the ground and sprang to his feet.

"You not talk now, you English dog, but soon you talk grand! Much heat make tongue wag! Plenty fire you get, plenty talk you make! You see!"

The younger Indian pulled David to his feet and thrust him before him through the doorway. Outside he called others and they came gathering about with cruel, snarling grins. He who had haled him forth spoke for a minute, evidently directing, and then hands were again laid on the boy and he was pushed and dragged over the ground toward where, at an edge of the swamp island, a lone cedar tree stood. Until they approached it, David believed the sachem's threat to be but idle, born of exasperation and anger, but now he knew that it was to be carried out. Fear and desperation lent him strength. Wrenching himself free from the grasps of those who held him, he shot a clenched fist into the face

of one before him, eluded a second, and dashed for freedom. But the attempt was hopeless from the first. Before him lay morass and stagnant pools, and even had he reached the swamp, he would have been soon recaptured. As it was, he was overtaken before he had gained it and found himself writhing, striking, even kicking with moccasined feet, in the grasp of many angry foes. And so, although he struck some lusty blows, he was speedily subdued, and lay, panting and glaring, on the ground while thongs were passed about his wrists and ankles and drawn cruelly tight. Then he was borne to the tree and held on his feet while, with his back against the twisted trunk, other ropes and thongs made him fast to it. His wrists were unbound and his arms drawn back around the tree and then secured again, which brought him into an attitude of much pain. When the last knot was tied, the Indians drew back and inspected him with grunts of satisfaction and smiles of cruel pleasure, and one whose bleeding lips proclaimed him as the recipient of David's blow stepped forward and struck him brutally in the face. The boy, seeing the savage's intention, jerked his head aside and the blow landed on the

side of his chin. But even so, it dazed him for a moment, and in that moment another delivered a resounding slap with open palm against David's face. The boy's head dropped to his shoulder and his eyes closed, and, seeing him so, the Indians, muttering and spitting upon him, went their ways.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ISLAND IN THE SWAMP

DAVID'S coma lasted but a few moments, and when he raised his head again, save that the persecutors had left him, everything was as before. The Indians had returned to their former occupations about the camp; a few taking food, others playing at their gambling games, still more lolling with pipes beside the rude wigwams. David, in spite of the dizzy, ringing feeling of his head and the weakness of his body, took heart. That they did not mean to torture him at once was evident, and while there was life there was hope. He found that by straightening his body he could secure relief from the painful straining of his arms, although he well knew that ere long that relief would fail him. The sun was climbing above the tops of the few trees that thrust their straggling branches from the swamp and the day promised to be close and hot. Already thirst was parching his throat. Food he had no wish for now. As the sunlight warmed the stagnant water of the partly dried morass around the island, a

fetid odor filled the air, and flies and mosquitoes began to increase the captive's sufferings. The English held that mosquitoes did not bite the Indians, and while this was not literally true, yet it was a fact, as David had observed, that the troublesome insects had less liking for the savages than for those of white blood. Perchance the boy's stained skin deceived the pests into mistaking him for a savage, since, while they bothered him greatly by alighting upon him, they seemed not to sting save infrequently. But the flies, a particularly bloodthirsty sort whose bodies gleamed in the sunlight like green jewels, cared not what color the skins of their victims might be and so proved of more painful annoyance than the mosquitoes. Fortunately, the cedar despite its twisted, misshapen body, provided fair shade from the sun's hot rays as the morning progressed and David was spared one form of torture.

None heeded him. The hours passed and the heat of the August day increased, and David's thirst became well-nigh intolerable. Altering the position of his body within the scant allowance of the thongs that held him no longer brought surcease from pain. His arms ached in every muscle and nerve, and

the cord about his wrists cut into the flesh. Despondency grew, and by the time the sun was at the zenith, he longed desperately for the merciful release of a bullet. At last, unable to bear the anguish of thirst longer, he cried with dry tongue for water. An Indian preparing food above a tiny fire of twigs near by looked stolidly across at him, hunched his glistening shoulders, and gave his attention again to the earthen dish before him. David raised his voice in a cracked cry and repeated his plea many times, but none more than stared at him. With a sob of self-pity the boy closed his eyes and let his head fall on his breast, and a sort of semi-consciousness enveloped him. From it he was presently aroused by the speaking of his name. Before him stood King Philip, Caleb, and several others of his company. He viewed them dully, his mind but half awake.

"You maybe talk some now," said the sachem, smiling evilly. "You maybe tell me things and speak truth, David. What say?"

David sought to moisten his parched lips. "Water!" he muttered.

The sachem spoke to one of his attendants and presently a cup was held to the boy's lips. But no more than a few swallows was

allowed him and the precious fluid was withdrawn in spite of his groans and panting pleas.

"You talk first," said the sachem. "Then you have much water. Where this man Captain Willard lodge now?"

David shook his head weakly. What the sachem said was but a meaningless jumble of words to him. King Philip's brow darkened.

"No talk yet? We see! Maybe you cold, David. Maybe you want fire."

Again he spoke in his own tongue and two Indians left the group. David had a premonition of danger, but his mind, drugged by suffering, sensed but vaguely what the sachem intended. He closed his eyes wearily and only opened them when the Indians threw armfuls of dried twigs and branches at his feet. Even then he but glanced down for an instant with indifferent eyes. The sachem spoke again to him, but David heard as though from a distance and made no answer. Then a stab of pain dispelled his languor and his eyes opened protestingly. The young Indian Caleb, grinning fiendishly, was pressing the point of his knife into the boy's shoulder. David flinched and moaned.

"Maybe you talk?" demanded the sachem, his face thrust close to David's, his eyes hard with wrath and cruelty. "Philip not burn you all up quick, David. Philip make you roast little, then you cool off. Maybe you talk plenty. Speak, you English dog-pup!"

"I know — nothing," mumbled David. "Give me — water!"

"Water? I give you fire! I make your tongue hang from your mouth! I make you suffer grand like your people make my children and my squaws suffer. You see!"

From the swamp to the west came the shrill call of a jay, twice repeated. At the first sound King Philip and those beside him stiffened to attention. At the third they turned and strode toward the center of the camp. David closed his eyes again and his head fell forward and merciful unconsciousness came over him.

From the swamp a straggling line of savages emerged and, signing greetings, approached the sachem. A scant dozen in all, most bore muskets and a number showed wounds that still dripped blood. They were not of Philip's company, but were Quaboags, and with them were three sagamores, Quanansit, Apequinash, and Mawtamps. One,

with bound hands, was plainly a prisoner. With few words the visitors seated themselves, following the example of Philip and his captains, and pipes were lighted. Then Quanansit spoke.

They had fought with the English and had killed many. The English were retreating to the garrison at Brookfield, pursued by nearly two hundred Quaboags. This man, Memecho, they had taken prisoner. He had guided the enemy and fought on his side. They made a present of him to the Great Sachem of the Wampanoags. It had happened thus. The English at Brookfield had sought a parley with the Quaboags, wishful of exacting a promise from them of friendship. The Indians had thereupon agreed to meet a company of the English, headed by Captain Wheeler and Captain Hutchinson, at a certain place three miles from the village that morning. The English had sought the locality, and not finding the Quaboags, who knew better than to expose themselves on the plain, had set forth toward Wickabaug Pond, guided by three Christian Indians, amongst them this Memecho. When their way had led them between a swamp on one side and a high bluff on the other, the

Quaboags, lying in wait, had attacked. Eight of the English had fallen at the first fire, and three more had been wounded so that they must die. Of these was Captain Hutchinson. The English had fought back for a time, and then, finding themselves like to be exterminated by a foe they could scarce see, had retreated toward the garrison, pursued by the Quaboags. Of the latter none had been killed and but few wounded.

"How many were in their company?" asked King Philip.

"Twenty, all mounted on horses, and the three Indians," answered Quanansit.

"How many are in the village?"

"We do not know, for some have come of late to aid them. Yet no more than eighty in all, we think."

"Good, Quanansit! Let none escape. Send a messenger to the Wachoosett sagamore, Woosonametipom, and bid him bring forward all his warriors. Encompass the village that none may leave or enter. At nightfall I will come also and when darkness hides us we will attack. Leave one here to serve as guide to me, Quanansit."

"This man will I leave, Philip. His name is Wompatannawa, a captain of the Niantics,

and he knows all paths and will guide you straightly."

"Good. And now, that you have done wisely and bravely, to you and to Apequinash and to Mawtamps I will make presents. I am poor, for the enemy has burned my village and sacked my lodges, but one treasure I still have. Give me a knife, Caleb."

Thereupon, removing his wampum coat, Philip cut three pieces from it, each containing near a peck of wampum, and gave the pieces to the three sagamores. The Indian Caleb observed the act frowningly and when Philip would have returned his knife he said: "I, too, have served, O Philip. Is there no reward for me?"

The sachem gravely picked a single wampum bead from the garment and handed it to him. "I reward according to your desert, O Caleb. This for your bravery in battle. It was but a few smokes since that I saw you kill a fly."

In the laugh that followed, Caleb angrily ground the wampum bead into the earth with his heel.

Food was brought to the Quaboags and afterwards they smoked, but before that one of their number, disencumbering himself of

his musket, had set forth through the forest to bear King Philip's command to Woosonametipom. When the afternoon was half spent, the visitors, all save him they called Wompatannawa, took their departure, and Philip's company began their preparations for the attack on the garrison at Brookfield, some six miles distant, looking to their weapons and ammunition, painting their bodies afresh and filling their pouches with rations of parched corn or dried fish. Two medicine men gravely made incantations about a circle drawn in the earth wherein lay strange objects; a human hand, dried and colored like the root of a tree, some colored pebbles, a string of wampum twisted about an arrow, the feet of a crow tied together with a red yarn, and other things. They chanted monotonously in low voices and stamped the earth, and sometimes turned their bodies about slowly with their arms upstretched to the brazen sky. Philip had returned to his wigwam for slumber, but Caleb sat disconsolately and moodily outside and with his knife whittled at a bit of wood. To him presently came the Nipmuck, Wompatannawa, and sat beside him and talked. Later the stranger arose and idly wandered

about the village, strictly observing the etiquette which forbade any semblance of curiosity. Presently in his wanderings he drew near to the cedar tree against which a brown body was held with thongs of deer-hide and rope. Idly the stranger looked, and then, spitting toward the captive, turned his back and went on. This, since his eyes were closed, the bound youth did not see.

The sun hung for a while above the forest trees in the west and then sank from sight. A few fires sent pencils of blue smoke straight aloft into the purpling twilight. The dogs, arousing from their somnolence, began their prowling and snarling. Food was eaten and water drank. King Philip, no longer bedecked with his wampum coat, emerged from his lodge and drew his counselors about him. A cool air came out of the southwest and the hovering hordes of insects disappeared. That refreshing breath caused David's eyelids to flutter, and presently a long sigh passed his lips and a tremor passed through his body. His eyes opened slowly and reason, restored by the long period of unconsciousness, dwelt again in his aching brain. Before him the encampment showed unaccustomed activity in the deepening twilight. Lodges were de-

serted and all the warriors were gathered near the center of the island, armed and freshly painted. Of the number no more than thirty bore guns, the boy observed. Even as he began to sense what such activity indicated, the Indians moved away toward the swamp, led by one whose slim height and grace aroused the ghost of memory in his tired mind. Silently the warriors passed into the twilight of the swamp, a sinister train of dark bodies merging with the shadows of the reeds and bushes. The last faint pat of footsteps died away and an eerie stillness descended on the island. Occasionally a rustling sounded from the thicket beyond as a bird stirred or a prowling mink or weasel sought the morass. After a while a great frog began his gruff song. The light faded from the summer sky and coolness brought relief to the hot, aching body and parched mouth of the boy. Hope revived in his breast. That King Philip had spared him so long argued well, he believed, for ultimate freedom. He doubted not that the fagots at his feet would have been lighted had not some diversion, dimly recalled, interrupted the sachem's intent. The departure of the company, armed and in war-paint, could mean but one thing,

battle with the English, and David prayed fervently that Philip would be defeated and his band scattered. And then: "Aye, but what will be my fate in such case?" he asked himself. "None know of my plight save these Indians, and hence none will come to release me! I doubt I can survive another day of this torture. It seems that whatever happens I am doomed!"

The realization produced a panic of mind that set him writhing and twisting at his bonds and accomplishing naught save to add to his pain and exhaustion. At last, discouraged, limp and panting, he gave up, and at that moment a voice came to him through the darkness.

"Brother!"

After an instant of surprise, David answered, hope rushing into his heart again. "Who calls?" he cried eagerly.

"Memecho." The voice seemed to come from some distance. "Who are you and why are you bound?"

"My name is David Lindall. This morning Philip's men captured me near here. I was seeking the garrison at Brookfield. For a month, may be, I have been held hostage by the Wachoosetts."

"Aye, I know of you, brother. Monapikot, a Pegan, has told us your story."

"Monapikot! He is hereabouts?"

"I said not so." The Indian lowered his voice. "Better it is to talk little, David, for we know not who hears."

"You are a friend? Will you not cut these cords of mine, Memecho?"

"Aye, so soon as you cut mine! I cannot help you, brother, for I am both bound and wounded."

David's heart sank. And yet even the presence and the voice of a friend was something to be thankful for, and after a moment he said:

"I grieve for you, Memecho. How happened this wound?"

"I fought with the English by Wickabaug Pond some hours ago. They sought the Quaboags to make a treaty with them and were set upon in ambush and had many killed and wounded. I, who led the English captains, was shot in the first volley from the swamp beside me, and, when I had fallen, could not follow back along the path and so was taken and brought hither."

"Is your wound of consequence, brother?"

"Nay, 'twill heal if it be given time, but my arm is of no use to me."

"You say the English had many killed, Memecho? And what happened at last?"

"They went back, still fighting, to the garrison, the Quaboags pursuing. Now they are beset by my people in great number and unless help come must perish."

"Is there help near, Memecho?"

"'Tis said that Major Willard has half a hundred soldiers under him at Lancaster, on the Nashua, thirty miles away. Yet unless word be taken to him what means it? One who sought to go at Captain Wheeler's command was killed ere he had ridden an arrow's flight. And now, since the village is surrounded, none may pass out."

"Had I but my freedom!" groaned David.

"Or I mine," said the Indian.

"How happens it that you talk my language so well, Memecho?" asked the boy, after a moment's silence.

"I am of the Praying Village at Chabanakongkomun, a Christian like yourself, David. I have learned to speak your language and to read and write it, though the writing is hard for me. I teach my brothers, or so

did I until this infidel Philip pillaged and drove us forth. It may be now — *what sound was that?*"

David listened. "I heard nothing, Memecho. Whither came it?"

"Be still, brother!"

And then David himself heard. From a little distance came the crackling of a twig, a tiny sound enough, but momentous to those who hearkened. Silence followed. David strained his ears. It might well be no more than a beast of the forest, and yet hope told another tale. After what seemed a long time, a swishing sound in the rushes nearer at hand turned his eyes sharply to the left. At first naught was to be seen in the gray darkness. Then, vague, formless, something emerged from the gloom close beside him.

CHAPTER XX

DAVID BEARS A MESSAGE

"NOAWAMA!"

"*Pikot!*" gasped David.

"Softly!" answered the voice of the Indian, now beside him. "Speak little and hearken much. There is little time for talk." Monapikot's knife slashed the thongs that held David, and then, as the boy would have fallen without their support, took him into his arms and laid him gently on the ground. "Rest," he whispered, "for there is a journey before you. I will return after a minute."

The Pegan stole away and David heard the murmuring of voices where Memecho lay. Presently both Indians were beside him and Monapikot lifted him to his feet. "Can you walk, David?" he asked.

David tried, but would have fallen save for the other's hold on him. "Slowly," bade the Pegan. "Put your weight on my shoulder and try again, Noawama."

In this manner, with Memecho following,

David left the marsh island. Gradually the use of his limbs returned to him, although each nerve and muscle ached intolerably and movement sent his head to spinning. But presently they were on dry ground in a forest of great trees widely spaced, and there they halted.

Monapikot spoke. "The garrison is in sore danger, my brothers, and aid must come soon. These plans had I made. Westward, at Hadley, are two English captains with many men. I meant to go thither and summon them. To the north and east is Major Willard, if report be true, by a place called Lancaster. To him would I have sent you, Memecho. But now I know not, for with your wound you are not fit to go."

"I will try, Monapikot," answered Memecho sturdily, but with a voice that told of suffering.

"Nay," broke in David eagerly, "give me directions for the journey, Pikot! 'Tis but thirty miles and surely I can win there by dawn! My strength is already returned, Pikot. Memecho is not fit for the task. Say I may go!"

"Aye, my brother, for I but waited for your word. Go, then, and when you have

found this English major say to him that Monapikot of the Pegans bids him come in all haste. Say to him that the garrison at Brookfield numbers less than a hundred and is beseiged by four times that many. Say to him that the English may hold out until the day after the morrow, but no later, and that I go to Hadley to ask relief of Captain Lothrop. From the pond that lies a league north leads a stream and beside it runs the path you must follow. When you have traveled three leagues farther the stream will be a river. That is the Nashua, David, and it will bring you to Lancaster village. By day your journey may be made more short, but in darkness 'tis better to let the river show the way. Here is food, though scanty. Seek not to haste at first, Noawama, but let your strength return. Are you thirsty? "

"Aye, my throat is parched, indeed, Straight Arrow."

"Water you will find but a little way from here, but do not drink deeply. Take but enough to cool your throat. Go now, for time passes. Wait! Take this knife. I can offer no more."

"But you, Pikot? Will you not need it? "

"Nay, I shall find another ere my journey

is well begun," replied the Pegan grimly. "Farewell, Noawama! God watch over you."

"Farewell, Pikot. We shall meet again in two days!"

"Be it so. Come, Memecho."

With a last glance toward the Indians in the starlight gloom of the forest, David turned and sought the trail. Slowly he went at first, for, despite his protestation to Pikot, his limbs were still unequal to their task. As the Indian had promised, his way crossed a small brook but a few rods beyond and the boy knelt and let the water dwell gratefully in his mouth, but, heeding Pikot's warning, took but a swallow of it ere he arose and went on again. The path was ill-defined in the darkness and was seemingly little used, but only once did he wander from it and then speedily found it again. And so, his strength growing each moment, he came at last to the pond he sought.

It was small, and he had soon reached the upper end of it, from which led a quiet, meandering stream. On the western bank, a rude trail followed the brook on its northward flow. There was little water between the low banks, for the summer had been

hot and dry, and for stretches David found the parched, sun-cracked margin of the stream offering better footing than the path. After an hour stream and trail both widened and bore eastward. The necessity for caution and the roughness of the path had thus far precluded speed, but now, when the brook had flowed into a second pond and emerged more worthy the name of river, David found himself able to take up the swinging trot he had learned from the savages. Unlike them, however, he could not maintain that pace for long, and soon he was obliged to fall back to a walk. During the first portion of his journey he rested frequently, throwing himself full-length on the ground and relaxing his tired body, but as time wore on his power of endurance seemed to grow rather than diminish and rest became less imperative until well toward the end. He kept eyes and ears constantly on guard, for this was a well-traveled path that he followed and at any moment he might encounter foes, and it was well that he did so, for, near midnight as he judged it to be, some sense, whether of sight or hearing he knew not, warned him of danger and he drew quickly aside into the thicket and crouched silently in the darkness. A

moment later, with scarce a sound, the form of an Indian came into sight against the sky, traveling westward, the body bent forward and the arms trailing in the tireless trot of his kind. At intervals of a few paces four others followed. Unsuspecting and looking neither to left nor right, the savages passed swiftly along the trail and were gone. For some minutes David waited in concealment. Then he went on again.

That was not the only alarm, for an hour or so later, where the stream and path led through a long swamp of alder and willow and rustling cattail, a sudden floundering and splashing but a few yards distant brought his heart to his mouth and held him for a long moment motionless on the path. But this alarm presaged no danger, for the sound was only that of some huge animal, probably a moose, disturbed and in flight. Occasionally river and trail parted company, as when the former cut its way through a narrow gorge of slaty rock and the latter mounted a little hill where, against the starlight, laurel and sweet-fern grew abundantly. But always they came together again sooner or later, and never was he for more than a moment or two out of sound of the river's mur-

mur and gurgle. Weariness was claiming him now as, ahead of him, the night sky began to light above the mysterious hills. Slumber called him and it needed all his courage and determination to resist its alluring voice. Perhaps it was only the knowledge of what his mission meant to the beleaguered inhabitants of the garrison back there at Brookfield that kept him somehow on his aching feet to the end. The last three hours of that journey became a waking nightmare of which, afterwards, he could recall little beyond the sheer suffering that he underwent. Dawn came up slowly out of the east and found him skirting a great forest of pines and hemlocks. The gray lightness showed his uncertain sight a cluster of cabins that dotted the plain ahead. A rude stockade fort caught the first yellow glint of the sun on its newly peeled logs. The river turned and left him to struggle on by a side path through coarse grass and trailing briers that caught at his faltering feet and thrice sent him sprawling to the dewy earth. Each time it took great toll of his strength to lift himself again and stagger on. And then the log wall of a little house suddenly barred his way and in the midst of a great feeling of thankfulness

he felt his way to the door and, dropping to the stone step below, beat weakly on the stout oak planks.

There they found him a minute or two later when, doubtfully, they unbarred the door and peered out. He was sound asleep then, but as willing hands lifted him across the threshold he awakened startledly.

"Major Willard?" he whispered. "I bring a message to him from Brookfield. He — is here?"

"Nay, but close by. Give me your message and I will bear it, lad."

"Monapikot, the Pegan, bids him haste to Brookfield. The Indians have attacked. Many English are slain. The garrison is besieged — by four hundred or more. Philip leads them." David's voice faltered. "There is more, but I — forget!" His head fell back and he slept again.

An hour only they gave him, and then he awoke to find the small room with its homely and scanty furnishings, so like his own home, filled with grave-faced men. One in soldier's accouterment sat on the edge of the pallet, a lean-countenanced man whose long, straight nose and wide-set eyes spoke courage and wisdom.

"Now, lad, your name and story, and quickly," he said with kindly imperiousness.

David gathered his scattered faculties and answered, and while he spoke those who had gathered close to listen murmured their surprise, horror, indignation, and, when it had become evident that the boy on the pallet had traveled that trail in some ten hours, admiration.

"Well done, in sooth!" exclaimed Major Simon Willard heartily when David had ended. "You are a brave boy, David, and there is one not far who will be prouder of your courage than I! Bide you here and rest you, lad. Mistress Farwell will look to your wants and when we return you shall be sent safely to your home. Unless, mayhap, your father has other views. That we shall determine later." He turned to the others and sprang to his feet. "You have heard, masters! To horse, then, and let us push forward, for the road is long and our presence is sore needed. I give you good-day, young sir!"

"Nay, sir, an it please you," cried David, clutching at the Major's doublet. "Take me with you, I beg. I can fight, sir! And I am well and strong again, now that I have slept."

"Nay, my lad, methinks you have earned a season of rest as well as our gratitude. Bide you here. Doubtless Mistress Farwell will find you Christian apparel of sorts. And that were well since your present state is like to fright the maids out o' their wits!"

The Major smiled and turned away. Already the room was empty save for a few, and through an open casement David could see the company preparing to mount.

"Sir, the odds be greatly against us at Brookfield, for Philip and the sagamores who fight with him have fully four hundred savages against much less than a hundred of the English, and I am no poor hand with a musket." David interposed himself between the soldier and the door and spoke earnestly. "Every one who can fight will be needed, sir. I pray you provide me with a musket and let me return with you."

Major Willard frowned. "'Tis plain your perseverance has survived the task you set it, David, but I doubt your father would look kindly on me were I to grant your request. Besides, horses are few —"

"I can go afoot," exclaimed David eagerly.

"Nor am I certain that a musket could be found for you."

"Then will I fight with bow and arrows, sir!"

Major Willard threw his hands apart and laughed shortly. "Do as you will. An you can fight as you argue 'twere a pity to leave you behind! But I take no blame, young sir, and so you must tell your father. And if he says you nay, count not on me for support. Now I will find if there be a horse for you. Mistress Farwell, give this lad food and speed him forth."

"What meant he by my father saying me nay?" David asked himself as he drew a stool to the table and the food laid thereon by his hostess. "'Tis far from likely that he will know aught about it until I return home, by which time his yea or nay will matter little, methinks!"

He ate quickly of the food, fearful lest the company be off without him, unconscious of the curious glances cast upon him by the children gathered without the open door. Nor, indeed, was he aware of their presence there until, thrust from behind, they flowed into the house. This small commotion drew his eyes from the window, and in the next instant he was on his feet, staring unbelievingly at the two men who came quickly through the portal.

CHAPTER XXI

TO THE RESCUE

"FATHER!"

David's startled cry drowned the sound of the overturned stool as he sprang toward the foremost of the two men.

"Aye, David," answered Nathan Lindall in his quiet voice, taking the boy into his arms with a mighty hug. "Art well?"

"But — but how happens it you are here?" stammered David. "Is it really you? I can scarce believe my eyes! And Obid, too!"

"What be left o' me," replied Obid Dawkin grimly.

But he smiled as David took his hand and threw an arm over his shoulders, and there was a suspicious moistness in his pale eyes for some moments after.

"'Tis a long story, lad," Nathan Lindall was saying, "and 'twill keep till we be on our way; for Major Willard tells me that naught will do but that you must accompany

us. So, if you have finished your repast, we will be going. I would never have known you, David, in this guise had I met you on the trail. Does he not make a fine young brave, Obid?"

"I grant you," answered Obid sourly, eyeing the boy askance, "but I'd as lief he aped the Devil himself, master. I've seen enough of the ungodly cannibals without having one in the family!"

Laughing, Nathan Lindall, an arm still about his son's shoulders, thanked Mistress Farwell and led the way outside. A few minutes later the company set forth. Four friendly Indians led the way. Of these one, as David noted with surprise, was his old acquaintance, Joe Tanopet, still wearing his green waistcoat. The Indians were unmounted. Behind them, in company with two younger officers, rode Major Willard, a fine and martial figure on his white steed. Followed the company of dragoons, each man fully armed with musket and baldric. Some wore, besides, a hunting-knife thrust into a leather belt. In all the company numbered fifty-three. David had been supplied with a horse, a small, flea-bitten gray mare with a dejected mien, and musket and am-

munition. It was shortly after eight o'clock when the little force left Lancaster and, fording the river above the settlement, took a broad trail into the west, which, more direct than that following the stream, nevertheless proved later to be a most arduous one, crossing many hills and floundering through quagmires innumerable.

But David had little thought for the road, for there was much to learn and to tell, and when the trail allowed he rode his mare close to his father's side and listened or talked. Nathan Lindall told of the journey with Master Vernham and others to the Wachoosett village and of its unsatisfactory result.

"Metipom received us as friends and gave a feast in our honor, but we were not deceived. Yet none would say that they had seen aught of you, though Tanopet spoke aside with many of the tribe. In the end, finding no trace of you, we must needs depart with what grace we might, although William Vernham was for enticing the sachem outside the palisade and making prisoner of him, a fanciful plan that we would not countenance. Had I not been assured that no harm would befall you so long as

Metipom's son went scatheless, I should have returned with an armed force and brought things to a head. But, as circumstances stood, for the Council at Boston would not countenance aught likely to interrupt the existing friendship between the Wachoosett tribe and the English, it seemed better to wait. I will not say, lad, that I was not troubled for you, and when Monapikot brought word that he had seen and talked with you and that you were well I was greatly relieved."

"He gave you my message, father?"

"Aye, lad, but two days later."

"I could not understand Pikot's presence there with those others, father, nor do I yet. 'Twas hard to believe him not a traitor, since they fetched with them the dried heads of two of our people and sought to embroil Metipom in Philip's quarrel."

"He did not tell you, then?"

"He said only that I must trust him, which I did, though not without misgiving."

"He keeps a secret well, but now that you have so well proved yourself, David, I see no reason why you should not know the truth about the Pegan. You may remove all suspicion of him from your mind, my son, for

Monapikot is a true and tried friend of the Colony, more trusted than any other of his race. Indeed, never since the days of the Pequot War has there been known a spy of such courage and wisdom."

"A *spy!* Pikot a *spy?*"

"Aye, does it surprise you so?"

"I had not thought," stammered David. "And it sorrows me. Always I have thought of a spy as one base and mean and unworthy, and to think so of Monapikot —"

"A spy is base only when he be apprehended," replied Nathan Lindall dryly. "Is it right to call one mean who takes far greater risks than any other and for no more return? He who fights in open combat may look for honorable treatment if captured, but the spy well knows that speedy death is aught he may win in such case. Nay, David, Monapikot deserves your praise and not your censure. No better nor more useful friend have the English to-day, for his ways of learning what we would know are many and marvelous. For several years he has served the Colony and never yet has he failed at aught he has been set to do. I hold it a miracle that he has so far escaped, for a dozen times has he put his head in the lion's

mouth, as when, but last month, he visited King Philip's village at Pocasset and brought back news of that infidel's intent. But to continue my story.

"This Nausauwah, son of Metipom, was lately brought to trial, and, although the evidence against him was not pressed lest the result should be his death and your undoing, yet he was adjudged a menace and deported to one of the islands in Boston Harbor, there to be held until peace is restored. Fearing the news of this would reach Metipom and that he would wreak vengeance on you, I applied to the Council for assistance and, as Pikot had brought word of the Wachoosetts' disaffection, Major Willard was instructed to go to their village, take prisoners, and rescue you. To this end, four days since, the Major's command visited the Wachoosett village, I and Obid accompanying them. But we found only a desert. Our guides soon found the signs of their departure, but the trail was already cold and pursuit was deemed ill-advised until we had added to our force. Yesterday twenty more dragoons joined us from Groton and to-day we were to have followed Metipom."

"He lodges near to Brookfield, father, and

has joined forces with Philip. I am fain that all who have proven traitors to their promises of good behavior be punished, father, and yet many of the Wachoosett tribe have treated me kindly and it would grieve me to see ill come to them."

"'Tis difficult in these times to pick the sheep from the goats, David," replied his father gravely. "I doubt not many innocent will be punished with the guilty. I've heard tell that at the Plymouth Colony so incensed are our people against the Indians that 'tis enough to have a red skin to merit death. Even about Boston the people are strangely panic-stricken and accept without question all the stories, no matter how improbable, that come to them. Mr. Eliot's Indians have come under suspicion and there is talk of removing them from the villages and holding them prisoners on some island in the harbor. It is said that some have proven false and taken the war-path with Philip. I do not know how true it be, but, on the other hand, a great many are fighting on our side, and methinks they so even the matter. Obid, howsomever, declares that those who have taken arms for the English do so but the better to betray us later. He has changed

none in his opinion of the savages since you left us, David." Nathan Lindall smiled dryly.

"But how came he to accompany you, father? I had not thought ever to see him bearing a musket and going a-soldiering!"

"An I mistake not, lad, he is as surprised to find himself where he is as you or I! He has no liking for this work, but came out of love for you and devotion to me, David. I think could he have had his way he would have marched alone into the Wachoosett country so soon as you were stolen, and sought your rescue! If, as I believe, it be the rarest courage to do what you fear to do, then is Obid the bravest man I know. He is convinced beyond all argument that he is doomed to be scalped and so spends much time each day in the nice arrangement of his hair. But now tell me of how affairs stand at Brookfield. Has this Sagamore-John indeed joined up with Philip, as 'tis rumored?"

"Of him I have heard naught, father, but I believe that all the Nipmucks in that part of the country have gathered to Philip's aid or will do so shortly unless they be taught a speedy lesson."

"Which they shall be taught," responded Nathan Lindall grimly. "But I pray the garrison may hold out until we reach them. 'Tis but slow progress we make, lad."

At noon the company paused a short while for rest and food. They were then on high land overlooking a wide and pleasant valley and had conquered a good half of their distance. Major Willard summoned his officers to him, by courtesy including Nathan Lindall, and plans were made for when they should approach the beleaguered village. Whether their coming was suspected or not by the Indians, they could not hope to gain the garrison's protection without a battle unless, having halted at a distance, they awaited darkness and entered the village by stealth. In that wise they might escape a serious encounter. Some were for marching straight to the village by daylight, trusting to the notably poor marksmanship of the Indians to win past without great loss, but in the end the decision was to tarry a mile or so away and send scouts ahead to learn the disposition and strength of the foe and then go forward under cover of darkness.

The last ten miles of the way presented grave difficulties to them. The trail, while

well enough for one afoot, abounded in swampy stretches too treacherous for the horses, and twice wide detours were made that added distance and consumed time. Yet at an hour before sunset the company reached a position something above a mile from the village on the north and a halt was called where stream and grass offered refreshment for the tired steeds. Thus far not an Indian enemy had been sighted, although, as David reckoned it, they had passed within a league of the Wachoosett encampment and were fairly within the demesne of the Quaboags. Two of the guides were dispatched toward Brookfield to reconnoiter, while the others were posted on either side to prevent a surprise. Food was partaken of in silence while the last slanting rays of sunlight filled the copse with mellow beauty. An hour passed. Then a distant musket shot was heard. Instantly a second followed it, and soon the firing was fairly continuous.

"The devils have begun a new attack," muttered Major Willard. "I would our scouts were back."

They came soon after, creeping stealthily from the brush. The Indians to the number of three hundred or more were disposed

about the village, they reported, sheltering in houses and barns. The garrison house still held out. They had seen Wampanoags, Wachoosetts, Quaboags, and a few River Indians. King Philip himself they had not descried. The Indians were armed with guns to about half their number. Many houses had already been burned and others were then in flames. The Indians had been feasting and drinking, and much loot was assembled at the edge of the town. To reach the village it would be best to make a detour toward the west and approach by a portion wherein more houses had been burned and where the enemy found fewer places of concealment. It might even be possible to attain to within a short distance of the garrison before discovery since the besiegers seemed to have set few guards on any side.

When twilight had well deepened, the guides set forth again and the dragoons got to saddle and followed. After a half-mile march through forest paths they halted again. Eastward the darkening sky was red with the reflection of the burning village and shots sounded incessantly. Now and then, since they had come to within no more than half a mile of the settlement, a shrill, shuddering

war-cry reached them through the still evening. Fortunately for them, the sky was now overcast and there was a feel of rain in the sultry air. Northwards, lightning began to play above the hill-tops.

Presently a further advance was made in all silence and then the company dismounted and the horses were led into a small glade and picketed. After which, having seen to their arms, the company set forth afoot, led by the guides, through the darkness of early night in the direction of the flame-lit sky.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ATTACK ON THE GARRISON

By a miracle, as it seemed, they reached the edge of the woods undetected, and from there, pausing a moment, had their first view of the distressed village. The firing had diminished somewhat, though from the garrison house, which stood, readily distinguished in the light of the burning buildings, near the center of the settlement, a flash now and then told of a musket shot. Between the rescue party and the beleaguered garrison many buildings had been burned, but the ruins, some still glowing and smouldering, afforded protection and served to hide their approach to some extent. Skulking forms flitted about in the lurid gloom, and under the lee of a still standing granary many Indians were to be seen gathered at some task not apparent from such distance.

Major Willard spoke softly and the company crept from the concealment of the forest, keeping as best they might under cover of the blackened ruins. A dozen yards were

traversed without alarm. Then a cry went up from the darkness at their left and an arrow sped past them. A dragoon at David's side stopped and fired, and simultaneously there was a groan from one farther in advance and he sank into the arms of a comrade. The Indians were firing at them now from the direction of the granary with muskets, while a number of arrows came from other points. Carrying the wounded man, they dashed across the intervening ground toward the garrison. From the loopholes of that building flashes told that they had been seen and that those within were seeking to protect them with their fire. From the moment of the alarm until they had reached the portal of the garrison was but a scant space of time, and so sudden had been their appearance that the enemy, surprised, confused, and, doubtless, uncertain as to their strength of numbers, presented small opposition. It was not until they were crowding through the door that the Indians began to fire upon them in earnest. Then, since they were well shadowed, the bullets and arrows did them no hurt save that one man received a trifling wound in his hand.

Their appearance was the signal for great

rejoicing amongst the inhabitants of the garrison, who, as it was proved, numbered about eighty all told. Captain Wheeler was in command. Captain Hutchinson, who had been sorely wounded the day before, lay on a pallet in the upper story. So far but one of the garrison had been killed and one wounded since they had taken refuge there. The Indians had attacked ferociously last night and again early in the afternoon, exposing themselves far more than was usual to the fire of the defenders, so that it was reckoned more than half a hundred had been killed. Of the relief from Hadley nothing had been seen or heard. Many of the garrison from constant fighting were wearied almost beyond endurance, and with the arrival of the reënforcements, these were sent to rest themselves while the dragoons took their places at the firing-holes. Food and ammunition were plentiful, though with fifty more on hand the water supply might soon give out unless all partook sparingly.

David took his place beside his father where a view of the village to the right of the garrison house was presented. It was from that direction that the next attack was expected, they learned. For nearly half an

hour the Indians had been quieter and it was believed that they were preparing a new attempt to set fire to the house. Many times they had tried it, since they had found that bullets and arrows profited them little. Last night they had dipped bundles of rags in oil and tied them to long poles and with those attempted to creep near enough to attain their fiendish object. But each time the fire from the garrison had defeated them. They had likewise tried fire-arrows, but with even poorer success. What new device they were considering remained to be seen.

It now seemed that the enemy was angered by the arrival of the relief, or, perhaps, at their own outwitting, for they fell to the attack with redoubled fury, firing from all sides. Seldom were the besiegers visible to those within the garrison, or, if visible, they were seen so uncertainly that accurate shooting was difficult. Yet muskets were discharged whenever opportunity afforded and quickly loaded again. The stench of powder became well-nigh intolerable within the house.

While the firing was heaviest an exclamation from his father caused David to blink his smarting eyes and peer more closely into the outer gloom. From around a corner of

the granary came some dark object that puzzled all who gazed. But in another moment, when the flickering light from a near-by conflagration fell upon it, it was revealed as a cart piled high with hemp and flax and such like combustibles. Already fire was licking it with red tongues. In what manner it was propelled was a mystery at first. Then, as it came nearer, it was seen that the Indians had spliced many long poles together, and so, from the shelter of the darkness and shadows beyond, were pushing it backwards toward the building.

"An that thing reaches us we be doomed," muttered Nathan Lindall, resting his cheek to his musket as he peered forth.

"I see none to aim at, father," said David.

"Nor I, forsooth! The villains have found them a pretty strategy!"

"There's naught for it save to charge forth and upset the cart ere it touches the house!" cried one. "Else we shall be roasted alive here!"

At that instant a great clap of thunder burst overhead that shook the earth and for the instant silenced the uneasy clatter of tongues. Then silence once more, a silence

in which no musket shot broke, in which the besiegers themselves seemed stricken to inaction and fear. The burning cart had stopped at a short distance, its contents now flaming prodigiously and, as it happened, lending aid to those in the house, for by its light the Indians who pushed from the end of the long pole appeared dimly in the background. A dozen shots burst together from the garrison and some of the Indians dropped or staggered away. But others took their places and again the cart came forward. At his loophole David could now feel the warmth of the flames. Suddenly what had escaped him before became apparent, which was that back of the cart, so close it was a marvel that their naked bodies were not scorched by the heat, three savages pushed, trusting to the bulk of the cart to escape detection. But now the flames had revealed them, and with a sudden fierce exultation David drew down the muzzle of his gun until it covered the breast of one who, not without a courage worthy a better use, plodded in fair sight behind the cart. The boy's finger pressed upon the trigger, and then a leaping flame threw its ruddy light full on the Indian's countenance and David's finger relaxed. For

the face was the face of Sequanawah, captain of the Wachoosetts!

Many thoughts rushed through the boy's mind in that tiny instant of time. He recalled Sequanawah's numerous kindnesses, his declaration of friendship, his sorrow at parting. He had but to press that trigger a shade more and the Indian's soul would go back to his Maker, for the naked breast lay a fair target below him.

"*Shoot!*"

It was his father's voice, almost drowned by the concussion of his own gun as he strove to send a bullet into the brain of one of Sequanawah's companions. David's heart contracted and the finger on the trigger again pressed tauter. But that instant of hesitation had made the difference between life and death to the Wachoosett. With a final thrust, the burning cart crashed against the house and the flames licked the boards and flared as high as the upper windows. And in the self-same moment a great flash of lightning blazed over the world, paling the ruddy flames in its white intensity. So unforeseen and alarming was it that those at the firing-holes fell back with gasps of fright. A terrific blast of thunder followed it, and the house

shook in every timber. When David sprang again to his post Sequanawah and those who had dared with him were gone. Close to the granary some forms emerged swiftly into the shadows and disappeared from his sight. From below came cries of alarm and consternation, for the flames from the cart were already eating at the building.

"Look!" exclaimed Nathan Lindall. "The granary is on fire! A lightning bolt has struck it!"

So it was, and David, peering forth, saw not only the flames bursting from the high-peaked roof, but the forms of many Indians swiftly fleeing from its shelter. One shot he sped, and then a second time the heavens opened with appalling radiance, again the thunder crashed, and, ere its last rumble had died away, from the sundered sky descended a torrent of rain such as none there had ever witnessed!

Straight down it came, a veritable cataract, and the noise of its falling on the shingled roof close above their heads was well-nigh deafening. Gazing into it was like looking through a solid sheet of water. For an instant only the flames of the burning houses showed through the hissing deluge. Then

only blackness was left on every side. The burning cart resisted longer, but that, too, was soon out, and through the house heartfelt expressions of joy and thanksgiving arose.

"Now has the Lord by a miracle delivered us from our enemies!" cried Nathan Lindall. "Blessed be the name of Our Lord!"

"Amen!" answered all who heard.

CHAPTER XXIII

STRAIGHT ARROW RETURNS

Though the rain was ended in less than an hour, it had served to so dampen the enemy's spirits that not again during the night did he renew the attack. Darkness and silence shrouded the garrison so soon as the storm had rumbled away into the south. There was sleep for some, while others remained on guard, and to all came a new hope and encouragement. Even Captain Hutchinson, in bad case though he was from wounds that caused his death many days later, spoke words of cheer from his bed of pain.

It proved a long night, but morning dawned at last bringing clear skies and radiant sunlight, the latter serving to accentuate the desolation that met the sorrowful view of the townsfolk. Sodden heaps of blackened ruins lay on every side. Only a few scattered houses remained undamaged. The granary had escaped demolition, though a part of its roof was gone. At daybreak food was eaten and a service of prayer and thanksgiving held in the garrison house.

It was shortly after that a friendly Indian, several of whom had shared the plight of the defenders, uttered an alarm from his place of watching. From the woods on the west of the devastated village came an Indian running fast and straight toward the garrison house. Already a few savages had been seen skulking about the outskirts beyond range of bullet, but this one was not of them. As David, peering forth with the others, beheld and wondered, arrows sped toward the runner from a patch of woods at his right. They missed their mark, and the Indian, swerving, ran toward the granary and, with a marvelous burst of speed, reached it unharmed and placed the building between him and the enemy. As he came again into sight about the nearer corner, David recognized him.

"'Tis Monapikot!" he cried.

"Aye, 'tis the Pegan spy!" called another. "Unbar the door!"

But Monapikot was not yet safe, for a puff of smoke arose behind him and a bullet buried itself in the dirt at his feet. The Indian who had sighted the Pegan from the house grunted, thrust his musket through the firing-hole, and fired. But the distance was

THEN DAVID WAS HALF PUSHING, HALF CARRYING MONAPIKOT THROUGH THE DOORWAY

too great and more shots spat about the runner, and suddenly, throwing up his hands, Monapikot whirled in his flight, staggered and fell flat and limp. David's heart turned to stone within him, and then he thrust aside one who stood in his path and sprang toward the door.

But his father was before him.

"What would you do?" he cried.

"Bring him in, father! He may not be dead!"

"Nay, lad, you would but meet the same fate."

"I care not! He is my friend, and if it be that he is but sorely wounded —"

There was a shout from the watchers. "He is up again! He comes! 'Twas but a trick he played! The door! The door!"

Swiftly it was unbarred and thrown wide. David, forgetting danger, dashed through it. Toward him, swiftly, came the Pegan. An arrow struck the ground well short and slithered across the turf. Then David was half pushing, half carrying Monapikot through the doorway, and then the portal crashed shut and the great bar fell back into place. The Pegan would have collapsed had not hands helped him to a bench whereon,

for a long moment, he sat with hanging head and laboring lungs. But presently, when water had been given him, he lifted his head and smiled at David's concerned countenance and then told his story, though in halting words.

"I bring you word from Captain Lothrop, at Hadley," he said. "The Christian Indians there are unrestful and a party of Nipmucks have come from Pecomtuck and threaten trouble. Therefore he sends you word that he dare not leave Hadley, since his departure might encourage both the Christians and the Pecomtucks to attack the people. I had no trouble in reaching the village, and there I rested all day yesterday, departing again last night after darkness. Returning, I encountered roving parties of Nipmucks and was twice taken and questioned. Once I talked myself free, but the next time they would have carried me back toward Hadley had I not killed one who held me and escaped in the darkness. Near to daybreak I found Nipmucks camped half a mile west of here and had to go far out of my way to get past them. The rest you know, brothers; save that the Wachoosett sachem, Woosonametipom, lies dead beside the gran-

ary with six others. I saw no wounds upon them and do not understand."

"'Twas the lightning!" exclaimed Captain Wheeler. "They lay close by the granary, Pikot?"

"Aye, their bodies be against the wall."

"So it was, then! The lightning bolt that struck the granary and set fire to it killed them at the same instant. It was the hand of God, neighbors!"

"They did not harm you, Straight Arrow?" asked David anxiously.

"Nay, I but fell that they might think me dead. If you have food, I would eat, for I have traveled fast."

An hour later, while David and Monapikot talked, word came that the enemy was again about to attack and all returned to their stations. Until just short of noon bullets and flaming arrows spattered against the house, but did no damage to the defenders. In the afternoon one watching from the upper story reported that many Indians were crossing a field to the southeast as though in retreat. By nightfall it was known with certainty that the siege had been lifted. Despairing of taking the garrison, the Indians retreated until, the next day, none was to be seen.

Scouts, dispatched in many directions, returned with the tidings that the country was free of the enemy for six miles around. The Wachoosett village had been abandoned and so with all other camps thereabouts, and it was believed that Philip and his cohorts were heading westward.

Two days later a party of eight set forth toward the east. Of these were Nathan Lindall, David, Obid (still, to his wonderment, possessed of his scalp), and Monapikot. With but one alarm and no encounter with the enemy, they reached safety three days later, and near the close of a warm August day David again crossed the threshold of his home. That evening, in a new and pleasant feeling of security, for King Philip's warriors had thus far given the more settled country about Boston a wide berth, David sat and listened, for the most part in contented silence, to the talk of his father and Monapikot the Pegan. Now and then, Obid, busy with his duties about the house, paused to add his shrill voice to the converse. They spoke of the war, that for many months longer was destined to keep the colonists in uncertainty and terror, and it was Monapikot rather than Nathan Lindall who spoke hope-

fully of the future and predicted the ultimate confusion of King Philip.

"He secures victories only where the English live apart from each other," said the Pegan. "To any bold front he turns tail like a fox. I fear much trouble in the west ere he finally skulks to cover, but if the Colonies will join forces and send fighting men upon him in numbers, he will flee and no more lives will be taken. He fears the winter that will soon come, for he has many mouths to feed, and when the Indian makes war he gathers no corn. Neither, when the leaves are off the trees, can he so well give battle, Master Lindall, and he has no stomach for winter trails."

"And what of the Narragansetts, Pikot? Think you they will fully agree with Philip and follow him?"

"Aye, master, if the English do not persuade them otherwise. Bad portents come from that country and I would that the Governors gave heed to such."

They were still in discussion when Master William Vernham and one of his servants arrived on horseback, and their neighbor, dismounting, clasped David in his great arms and boisterously gave him welcome home.

"A brave and sturdy lad you are, David," he declared, "and I would I had one like you. You are well and unharmed of those varmints? But an hour ago I got word of your coming from one who saw you by Sudbury and I ate my supper in such haste that it liked to choke me. And you, Master Lindall? You, too, it seems, have escaped from the wolves. But I see not Obid. Can it be that he has — has — "

"Nay, then, master," responded Obid from the shadow wherein he sat, "the Lord brought me safe through, but whether to so continue or whether in postponement of a direful fate I know not yet."

"You are as cheerful as ever," laughed William Vernham.

"What I have been through, master, and the sights my eyes have beheld make not for cheer."

"Well, well, and now what for you, David? Of a surety you will have no mind for digging the garden and milking and such like tasks since you have tasted of a soldier's life!"

"I know not," replied David. "It shall be as my father says, though, an I had my wish — "

"What, then?" prompted Nathan Lindall as the boy hesitated.

"Why, then, sir, I would go forth tomorrow and seek service with those who fight for the safety of the Colonies. Nor would I wish to lay aside my musket until this murderous Philip be driven north or slain."

"Well said!" cried Master Vernham. "A lad after my own heart, Nathan Lindall! You'll not say him nay, I warrant."

"He shall have his way," replied the host gravely. "Though he knows it not, 'tis arranged already. Three days from now Monapikot travels south to the Narragansett country on a mission you may surmise, Master Vernham, and 'tis arranged that David shall accompany him. There may be less fighting than he craves, but he will be in good hands and what he performs will be of service to the Colony."

"'Tis true, father?" cried David eagerly. "'Tis true, Straight Arrow?"

The Pegan smiled. "Aye, 'tis true, Noawama. We take the trail together, you and I. Danger there will be, though. Wilt brave it?"

"Try me!" answered David. "With you I'll brave aught that comes!"

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